WILL MEL KARMAZIN SAVE CBS—OR SELL IT? by Alan Deutschman

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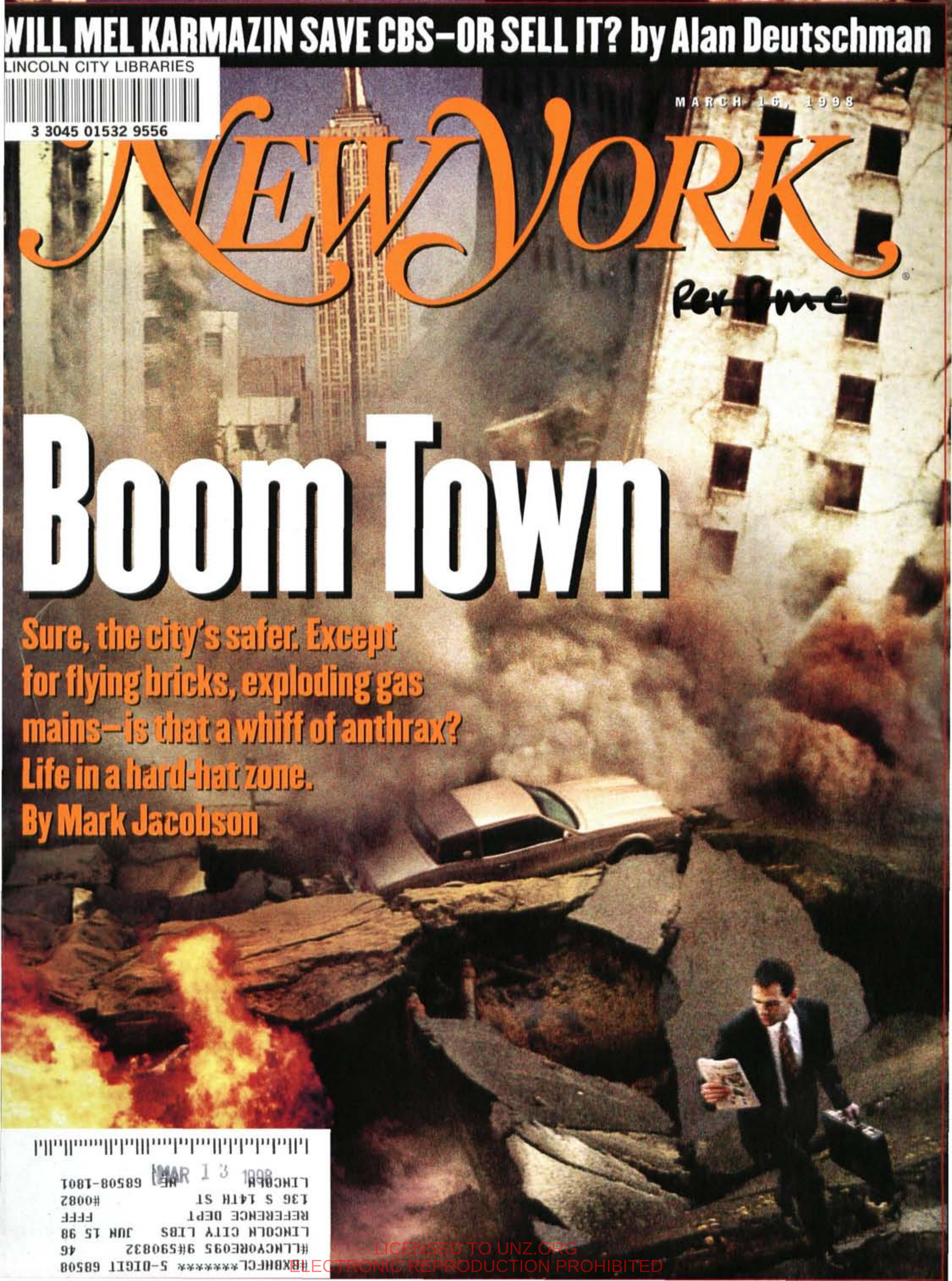

Boom Town

Sure, the city's safer. Except for flying bricks, exploding gas mains—is that a whiff of anthrax? Life in a hard-hat zone.

By Mark Jacobson

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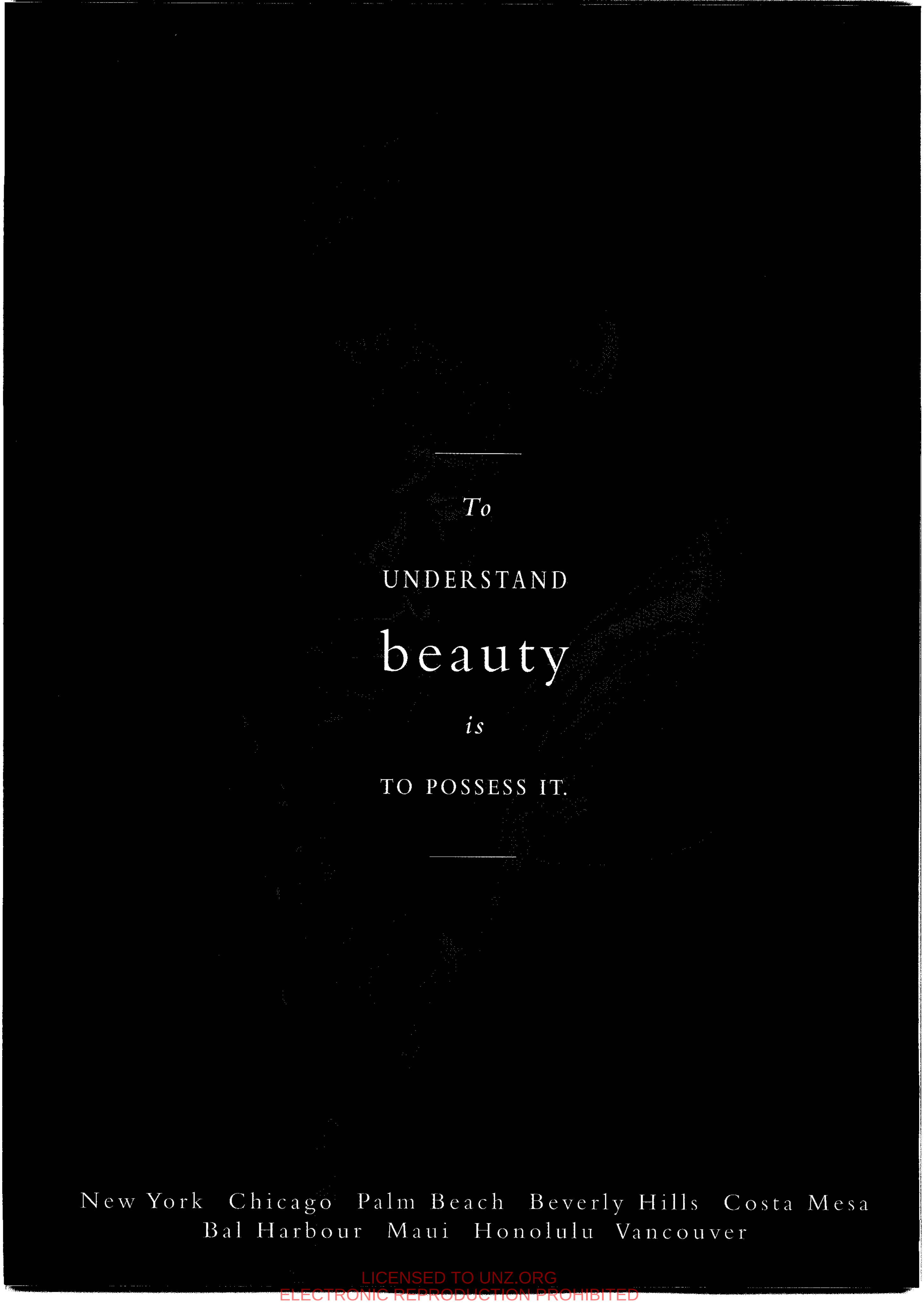
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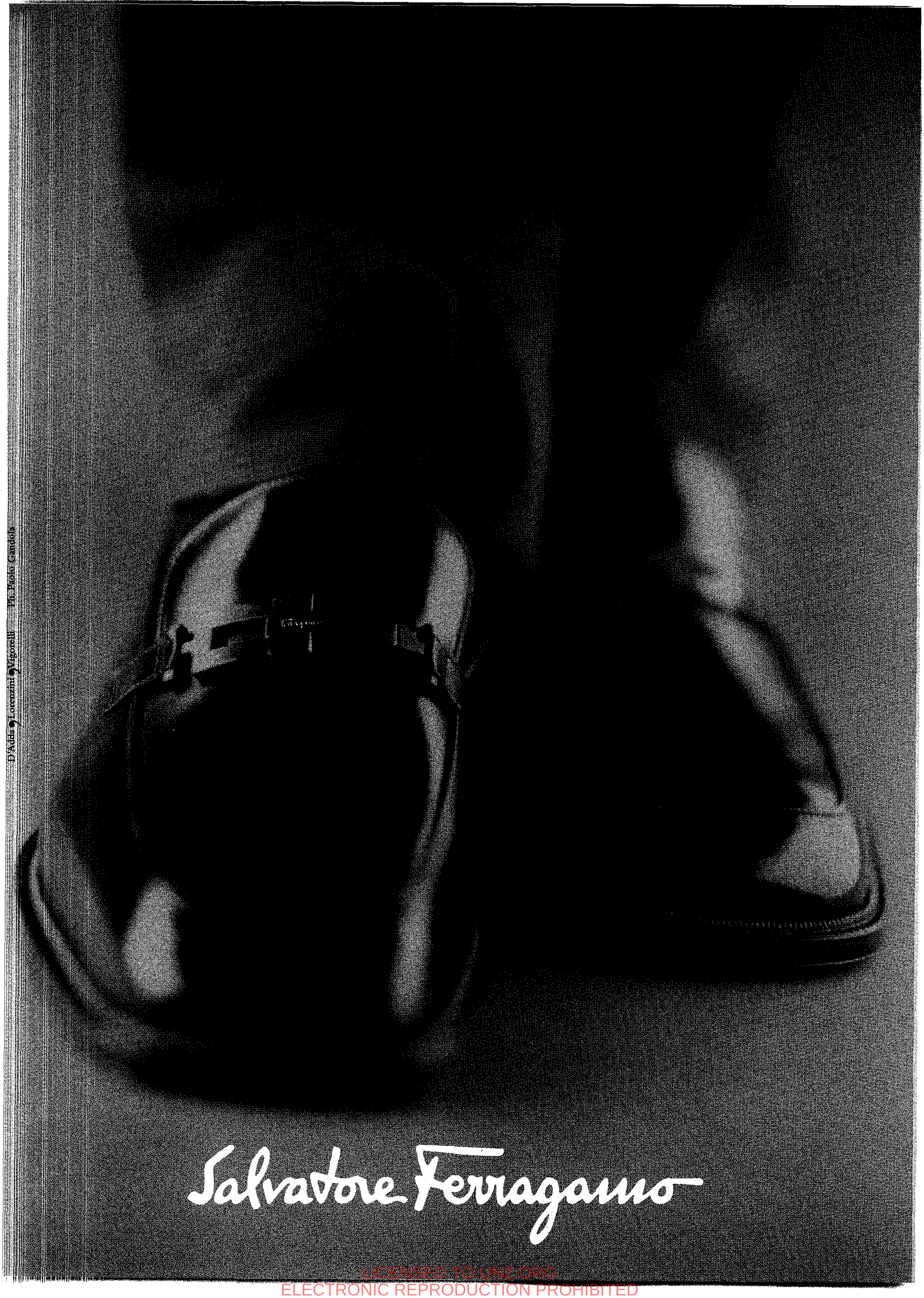
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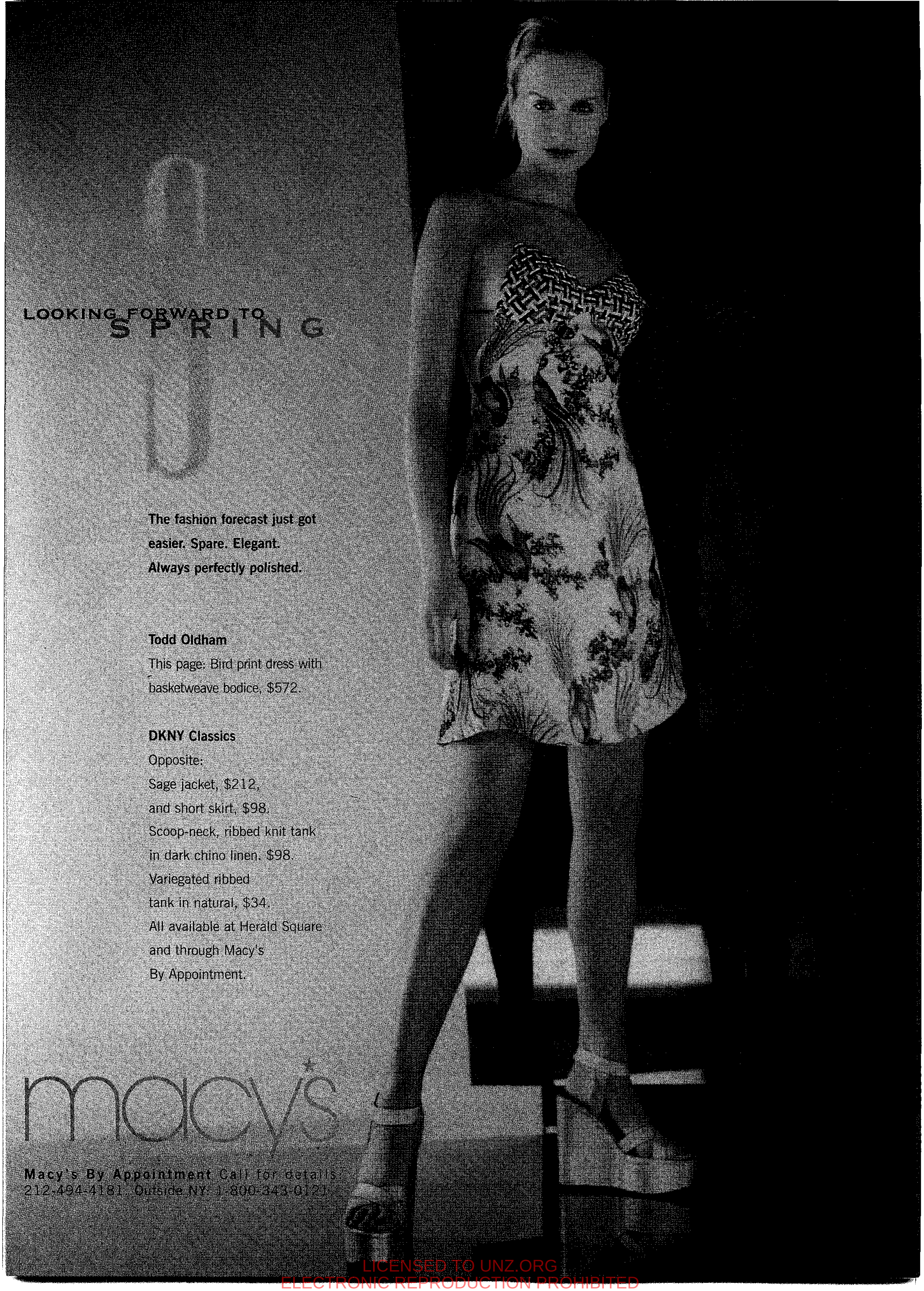

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Todd Oldham
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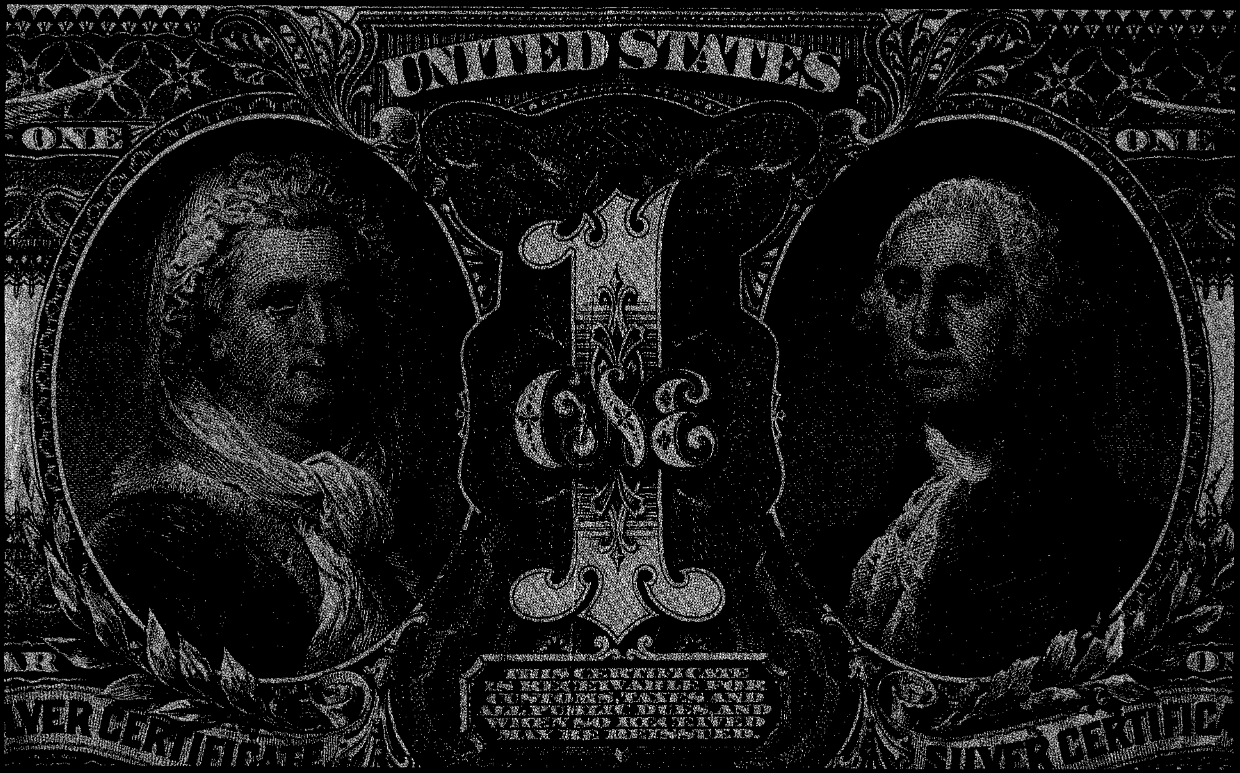
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>
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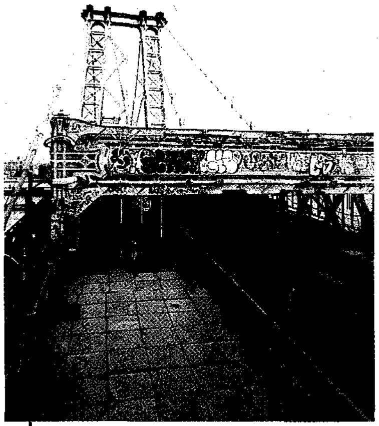

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Larry Meistrich runs a little production company called the Shooting Gallery. But he wants to be Jack Warner. What to do? Build his Hollywood on the Hudson (okay, the Jersey side).

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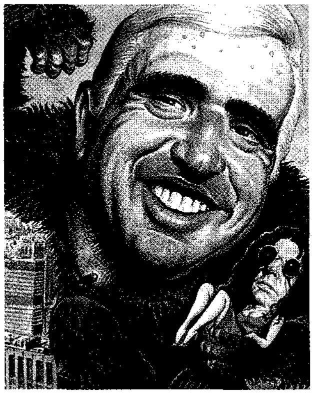
Mel Karmazin, the man who made Howard Stern a household name and took his radio empire from $17 to $170 a share in three years, is now applying his intense style to repairing CBS. Denizens of Black Rock are rattled, but Wall Street is betting on Mel—who just happens to be CBS's biggest solo stockholder.



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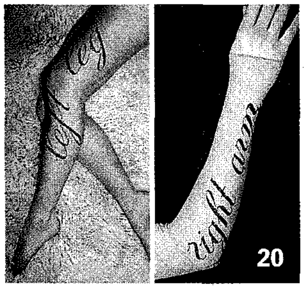

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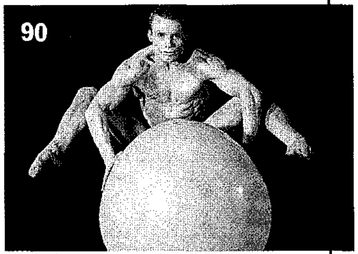

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Cover: Photo illustration by Sanjay Kothari. Photographs: building at left, Larry Hughes/Image Bank; Empire State Building, Sanjay Kothari; building at right and smoke, Craig Hammell/Stock Market; fire, Philip Greenberg/New York *Times*; car and hole, Bill Biggart/Impact Visuals.

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Iowa boy yearns for Yellow-Ribbon kind of girl. USC football player turned actor gets start as gofer for cowboy legend Tom Mix. After 70 films, mostly oaters, John Ford casts me in Stagecoach. Rugged, honest–on screen and off. Hey, pilgrim, let's tour the Wild West. Hit the Red River, shoot the Rio Grande, visit the Alamo. Then, fly the Pacific to my favorite movie haunts–from the sands of Iwo Jima to the shores of Vietnam. Searcher for a role with grit, and the good guys always shoot straight. Ride tall in the saddle with me on A&E, Sunday night, March 15, at 8pm on Biography®.

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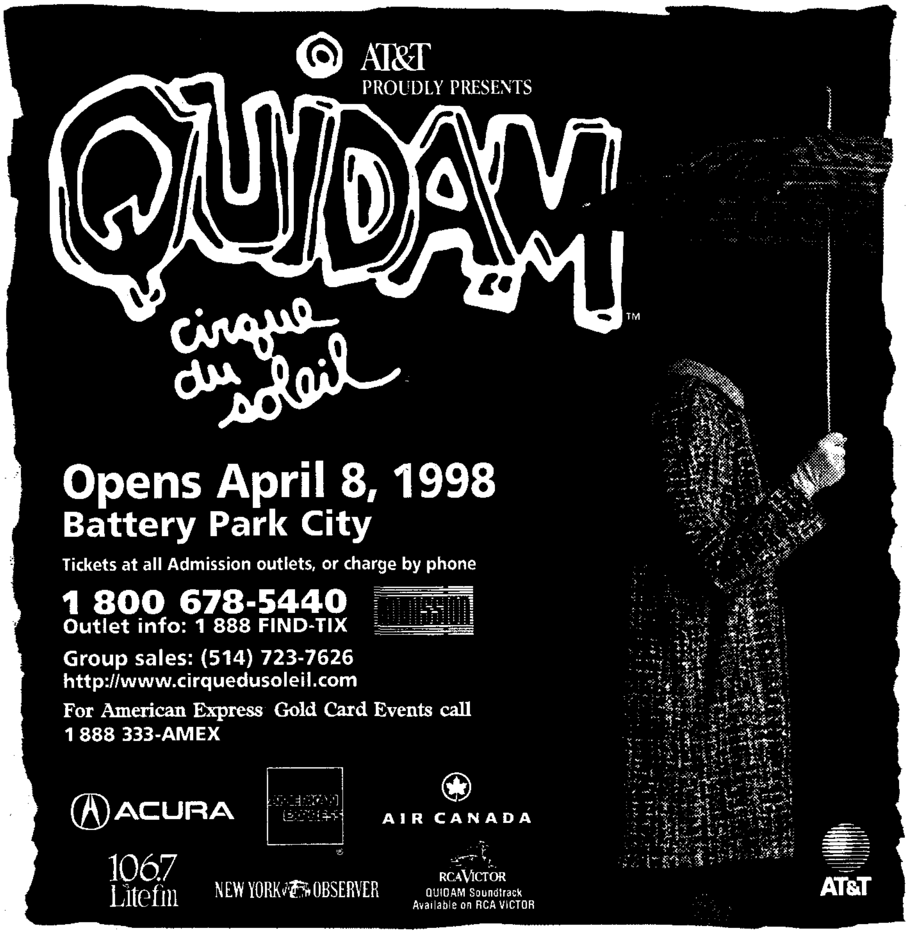

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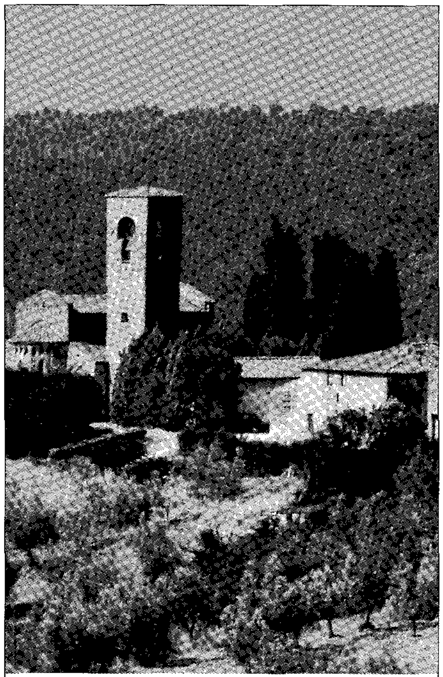

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LETTERS MARCH 16, 1998

Jackie Solo

Just another gold-digger?; sympathy for the Lower East Side dispossessed; who'd turn down Drew?

I WOULD LIKE TO NOMINATE JACQUELINE Bouvier Kennedy Onassis for the Marie Antoinette Award for the twentieth century. She takes greed, selfishness, and vanity to a new level ["Woman About Town," by Christopher Andersen, February 16]. Like Marie Antoinette, Jackie was totally oblivious to the needs of society. She had many opportunities to help lend her name, not her money, to worthy causes, like Princess Diana. Did you ever see Jackie visiting the sick in a hospital or going to a disaster area when she was First Lady?

Jackie had relatively little family money. Only through carefully manipulated marriages did she succeed in acquiring big money. Her own sister, Lee, had designs on Aristotle Onassis. Jackie took Onassis away from Lee because she realized she had limited funds. Do you think her widow's pension would have paid for her designer gowns?

If money is the sole criterion for living, Jackie indeed did very well for herself. She chose the right men, who gave her fame, fortune, and opportunities unavailable to most people. Even in her will, Jackie chose to use a charitable trust so that all the principal—$40 million-plus—would go to her heirs. This was good financial planning on her part. However, Jackie chose to live for Jackie—selfish to the end.

June Johnston
PALM COAST, FLA.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU! YOU'VE FINALLY told us what we've all been dying to know: what Jackie really thought about Princess Diana. So clever—and timely—of Christopher Andersen to find this refreshing new angle for his article. But seriously, can't *New York* come up with something new and different for a cover story? How about the death of Marilyn Monroe, for example?

Suzanne Atkinson Delaney
MANHATTAN

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Dangerous Beauty

I NORMALLY DON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION to fashion, but I found the cover of the Spring Fashion issue so strikingly beautiful, I was compelled to buy the magazine [February 23]. James White's image is sensual but also poignant and somehow sweet, and it transcends the usual artsy-sultry nature of most high-fashion photography.

David Goldbrenner
MANHATTAN

Homeless

MY HEART GOES OUT TO MARK ZERO ["Cityside: Demolition Man," by Mark Jacobson, February 16]. It's beyond my comprehension how some higher authority could order an entire buildingful of people to abandon their homes, and wipe everything away—even though there was no immediate danger. To say that the authority destroyed lives has to be an understatement: It practically erased people's identities. If Rudy Giuliani really wanted to protect these people from the imminent danger of their home's collapsing on them, then he should have organized a daylong evacuation and had the government help these residents find new homes.

Stacy Guerasseva
MANHATTAN

Picks and Pans

I'M AN OSCAR JUNKIE. SO IT WAS WITH EXcitement that I read the piece by Harry Knowles predicting this year's Oscar nominations ["Who'll Play the Iceberg?," February 9]. I was appalled that Knowles, while praising Pam Grier's talents, had to introduce the race issue. Why did he feel compelled to state that if Grier wins the Oscar, it will "mollify" Jesse Jackson? And who exactly is he referring to when he writes that "Grier's *own* people, though, are sure Helen Hunt's going to get it"? When can African-American actors be judged by their acting abilities and not have their success and accolades seen as a way of appeasing "their people"?

Sharon Myrie
BROOKLYN

The editor responds: The suggestion that Pam Grier's winning the Oscar would "mollify" Jesse Jackson was meant to reflect the possible thinking of Academy voters. The suggestion turned out not to be accurate since Grier was not nominated. Further, "own people" is a Hollywood colloquialism that refers to one's entourage, not to members of one's own race.

KUDOS ON YOUR SELECTION OF HARRY Knowles to handicap this year's Oscar race. Knowles is funny, his perspective is fresh, and his percentage will undoubtedly be a high one. That said, let's hope the observation that *L.A. Confidential* compares amateurishly with *Chinatown,* one of the best American films ever made, represents the collective wisdom of Knowles's informants rather than his own insight. Even in fun, it's a good idea to keep the critical barbs above the belt—up to at *least* the level of discourse on movies we have come to expect from *New York* Magazine and Harry Knowles.

Larry Collins
MANHATTAN

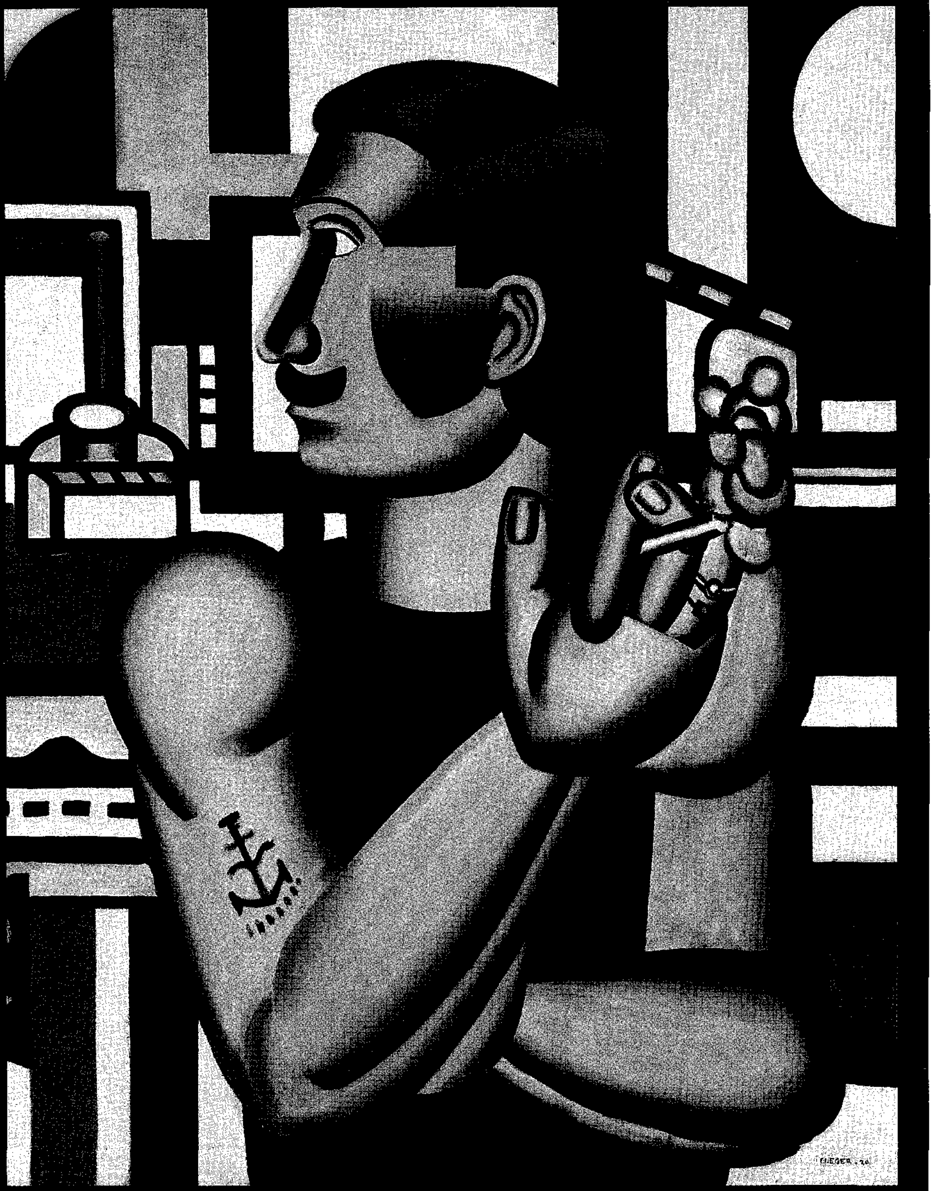
Eighties Memories

MOVIE CRITIC DAVID DENBY TOOK A HELL of a long time to make a rather simple point in his review of *The Wedding Singer* ["Movies: The Sound of Muzak," March 2]. Though I don't disagree, I'm quite sure that as with *Grosse Point Blank,* you had to be there. How old is Denby now, 112? Sandler and Co. were no doubt well aware they'd be upstaged by the deadly accurate period stuff, so they gave us the low-key, charming, and believable love story no one ever gets right. (Attention, Kevin Smith.) But my dander really went up when Denby had the *cojones* to call Drew Barrymore a "plump angelic blonde." Plump? Yeah, if big old fat Drew Barrymore sat on your lap, Mr. Denby, I'm sure you'd be crushed. Pulverized, even.

Jill MacDowell
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Correction Missing from the cover credits for the February 23 Fashion Issue was the following information: Jacket, $1,765, tank, $1,025, and skirt, $1,230, by Alber Elbaz for Guy Laroche at Bergdorf Goodman and Saks Fifth Avenue. Shoes by Manolo Blahnik for Stephan Jansen, $445 at Manolo Blahnik, Barneys New York, and Bergdorf Goodman. Hat by Marta Ziemirska-Panek, $300 at Dimson Homma. ■

Fernand Léger.



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Above: Fernand Léger. *Le Mécanicien (The mechanic).* 1920. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
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INTELLIGENCER

RUDY WILL GET A NEW POLICE REPORT

The report on New York's Police Department soon to be released by **Rudy Giuliani**'s mayoral task force is bound to contain some unpleasant criticism of the boys in blue. But no matter how harsh the findings are, they will pale in comparison with those in another report due out the same week. The mayor's task force was assigned to investigate charges of police brutality following the **Abner Louima** incident. But now task-force members **Norman Siegel,** executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and **Michael Meyers,** executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition, are releasing a dissenting report charging that Giuliani never supported the task force. Says Meyers: "Giuliani never gave us a budget, and he never gave us a staff. He just abandoned us." Meyers says that when he and Siegel voiced their complaints, "Giuliani suddenly announced he wanted everything finished in 60 days. We were aborted." According to Meyers, the dissenting report will "address widespread and systematic police misconduct, and the total managerial meltdown of policies intended to monitor such behavior." The official report, from the team's assorted collection of public citizens (whom Meyers classifies as "Giuliani allies"), will be "fluffy stuff about cultural-diversity training and creating community dialogues," says Meyers. "Everyone else did what Rudy said, and they rolled over, because they were never critics of his. But Norman and I are not rolling over." A representative of the task-force committee would say only: "I feel we should wait until our report is out before commenting on the nature of our efforts."

ROSIE'S POLITICAL THREE-WAY

Rosie O'Donnell apparently likes to play the field. Faced with a crowded race for the Democratic senatorial primary, O'Donnell is publicly supporting *two* candidates—so far. She's hosting a $100-a-person fund-raiser for **Geraldine Ferraro** on March 24 at the Manhattan Center Studios. And last year, she co-hosted a benefit held for **Mark Green** to raise funds for both his public-advocate and Senate-primary races at Carolines Comedy Nation. This time around, Ferraro enlisted O'Donnell's support personally, asking the talk-show queen to help her out when they met at the wake for **Katie Couric's** husband, Jay Monahan. "Everyone knows that if the Knicks are playing the Nets, you can't root for both to win," says one longtime Democrat supporting Green in this race. "Rosie just wants to beat **Alfonse D'Amato,** and I think she'll help anybody who has a possibility of doing that," explains O'Donnell's publicist.

Rosie O'Donnell: Cocktail partisan?

A MODEL SQUABBLE OF USUAL SUSPECTS

Screenwriter **Roger Wilson** has plenty of real-life material to draw on in his work. Last week, news broke that model **Kathleen McManamon,** his ex-girlfriend, was accused of making death threats and charged with harassing him once he left her for his current flame, *Showgirls* star **Elizabeth Berkley** (left). Wilson also played a supporting role in the insider-trading scandal involving former *Wall Street Journal* reporter **R. Foster Winans:** The scheme was cooked up by friends of Winans's who were trying to make money quickly to replace the millions they'd stolen from Wilson's account. An heir from New Orleans, Wilson was a Studio 54 habitué who became known as a serial model-dater. First, he briefly married cover girl **Shaun Casey;** then he dated models **Kelly LeBrock** and **Christy Turlington.** "The current case is a serious matter being pursued by the D.A.'s office, and no celebrity is going to ignore a death threat in this day and age," says his lawyer, **Paul LiCalsi.** McManamon's lawyer, **Joseph Tacopina,** says he "eagerly awaits the opportunity to cross-examine Wilson."

ONE *TODAY* AT A TIME FOR KATIE COURIC

Katie Couric: *Today's* news

No sooner had **Katie Couric** come back to work than rumors of her imminent departure from NBC started to circulate. Couric, whose contract is up in July, is being courted by at least two syndicators, ABC, and CBS, several industry insiders report. On *Today* since **Deborah Norville** left in 1991, Couric reportedly earns $2 million a year. "She's really underpaid, when you figure that that's what **Forrest Sawyer** makes [at ABC]," points out one industry source. The Peacock Network was already negotiating with the morning anchor in December, when it signed a complicated deal with **Geraldo Rivera** that is estimated to pay him around $5 million a year—more, industry insiders speculate, than the network was initially offering her. *TV Guide*'s **J. Max Robins** reported in January that **Jeffrey Katzenberg** was dangling a DreamWorks syndicated show before Couric, and those talks

Photographs: clockwise from top right, Henry McGee/Globe Photos; Jim Spellman/Corbis; Gregg DeGuire/London Features.

Drew Nieporent: Over the Rainbow?

MILLA TAKES ON THE NAKED CITY

And some models say their work is boring. When **Milla Jovovich,** star of **Spike Lee's** upcoming film *He Got Game,* joined with photographer **David LaChapelle** to shoot the cover of this month's *Detour* magazine in Los Angeles, the pair almost ended up in jail. LaChapelle's idea for the shoot was a "young new beauty lands in Hollywood" theme. "We just went crazy, goaded on by Milla's mother," reports LaChapelle. "She kept saying: 'More make-up, less clothes.' It became our mantra." The entire crew ended up in front of Mann's Chinese Theater, with Jovovich holding a giant inflatable Oscar and posing in little more than a Gucci thong. When a gathering crowd of tourists added to the commotion, police arrived on the scene. Jovovich and LaChapelle (who had no permission or permits for the site) fled from the authorities. "We just ran to the van and took off, with our smoke machine still running, leaving behind this trail of white smoke," he says, laughing. Jovovich's outrageous antics didn't make it onto the glossy's cover; the magazine went with a more "conservative" shot instead.

Milla Jovovich: All flash

are continuing, according to two knowledgeable sources, as are discussions with other outlets. But most insiders expect her not to leave her home base so soon after the death of her husband. Says one source close to Couric, "Right now, she's really not focusing on it. She's worried about getting her life and her family together."

RAINBOW ROOM: WHO WITH-DREW?

Drew Nieporent, Joe Baum, and **David Emil** may have beaten out the competition for the much-coveted contract to take over the Rainbow Room, but now it looks like they may walk away from the opportunity. Sources close to the situation say that Emil, Baum, and Nieporent are refusing to pay the approximately $4 million annual rent that landlord Tishman Speyer is asking. Says Nieporent, "We still want to do it, and we think highly of them as landlords. Hopefully, there will be some resolution." But a source close to management claims that the real problem is with the partners. "The partnership has blown up; Drew backed out for his own reasons, and Rockefeller Center doesn't want to go ahead with just the others," says the source. "Now they are talking to other restaurateurs." The partners maintain that that's just not so. "There is absolutely no problem with Drew," says Emil. "We are all just having a problem reaching a conclusion on the economic terms." Meanwhile, the owner of Nobu, Tribeca Grill, and Montrachet is readying his restaurant in the Doral Hotel, and word is he is about to sign a lease on the space in the Sony building that formerly housed the Quilted Giraffe. Nieporent would not comment on this last venture.

LAURA'S NEW GIG; BERENDT'S NEW DIGS

WILL THE LEOPARD CHANGE HER SPOTS? **Monica Lewinsky** isn't the only gal in Washington whose future career is uncertain. Rumors are rife around CBS that **Laura Ingraham,** the conservative pundit famous for wearing a leopard-print miniskirt on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine,* may soon be demoted from her slot as a political correspondent for the network. When CBS News chief **Andrew Heyward** flew to Washington on February 27, everyone assumed he was about to tell the blonde Gingrich fan that her contract wouldn't be renewed. One CBS insider says the network is "looking for different ways to use" Ingraham; another source confirms that Ingraham has always been viewed as a controversial figure around Black Rock. A spokeswoman for Heyward insists he went to D.C. to participate in a **Marvin Kalb** panel. Ingraham did not return a call placed at deadline.

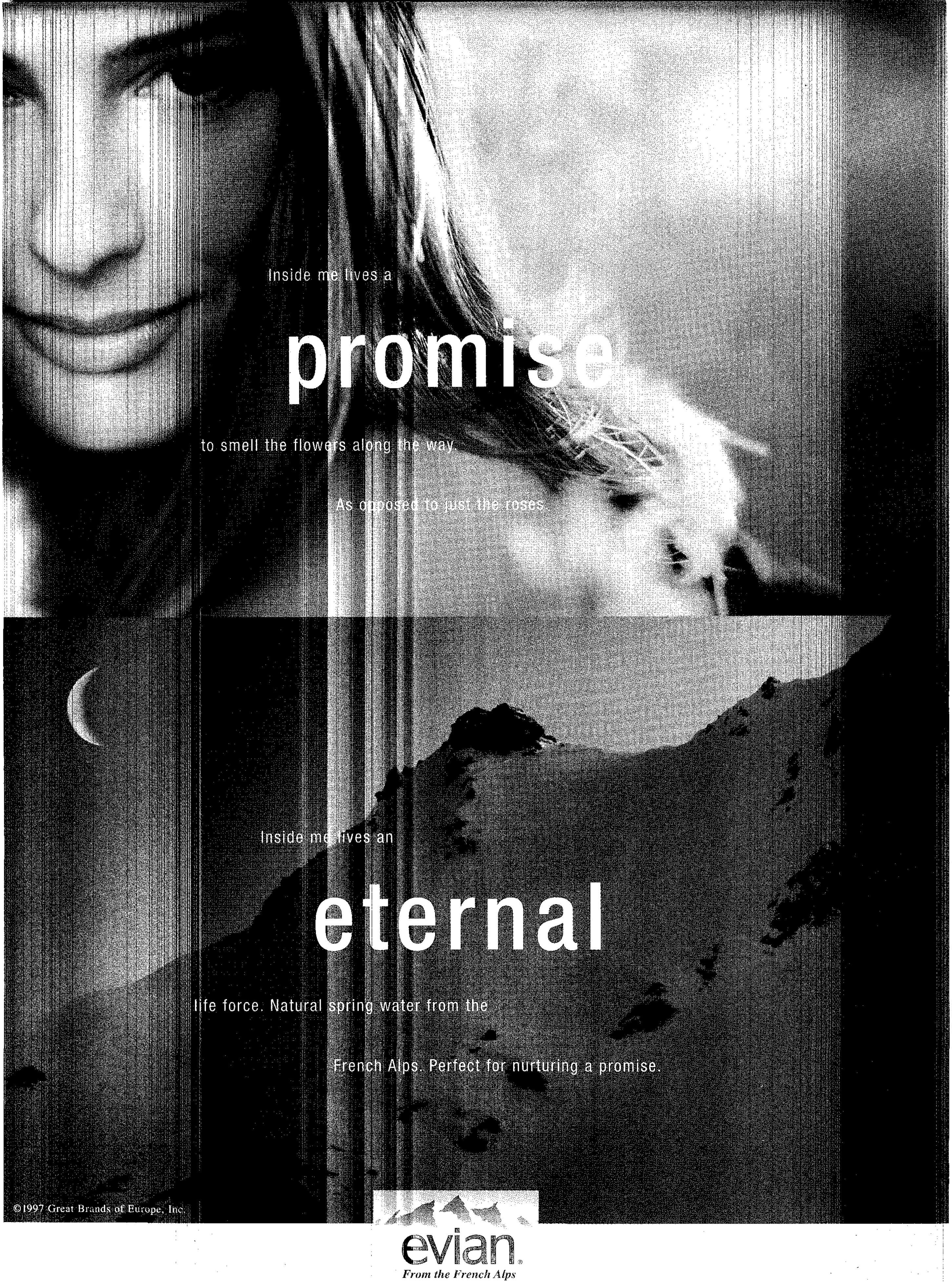
BERENDT'S EMPIRE EXPANDS: When your work goes Hollywood, it really pays off. *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* scribe **John Berendt,** whose book was recently turned to celluloid after spending three years on the best-seller list, has finally moved out of his small Upper West Side one-bedroom and into a sprawling brownstone nearby. A historic one, of course. Berendt's response to the move: "No comment.'

Additional reporting by Kate Coyne and Emily Spilko.

CUOMO: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Elephants really do never forget. Mayoral chief of staff **Bruce Teitelbaum** headed to the Republican National Committee in Washington recently to discuss site selection for the next convention, but while he was there, he started laying the groundwork for a possible presidential bid by **Rudy Giuliani.** Teitelbaum was hoping to find GOP support for the Giuliani nomination, but he encountered one big stumbling block: Several committee members invoked the name *Cuomo,* a reminder that the mayor crossed party lines to support **Mario Cuomo** during the 1994 gubernatorial race. "Why should they give Bruce what he's asking for when Rudy turned his back on them four years ago?" says one political insider. **Colleen Roche,** a mayoral spokesperson, said Teitelbaum met with the GOP only to discuss convention sites. "There was no talk about Rudy for president; Bruce wasn't putting out feelers," Roche insists. A spokesperson for the RNC confirmed that Teitelbaum did meet with the committee but declined to comment further.

Photographs: left to right, Steven Freeman; Alison Rohme/Corbis.



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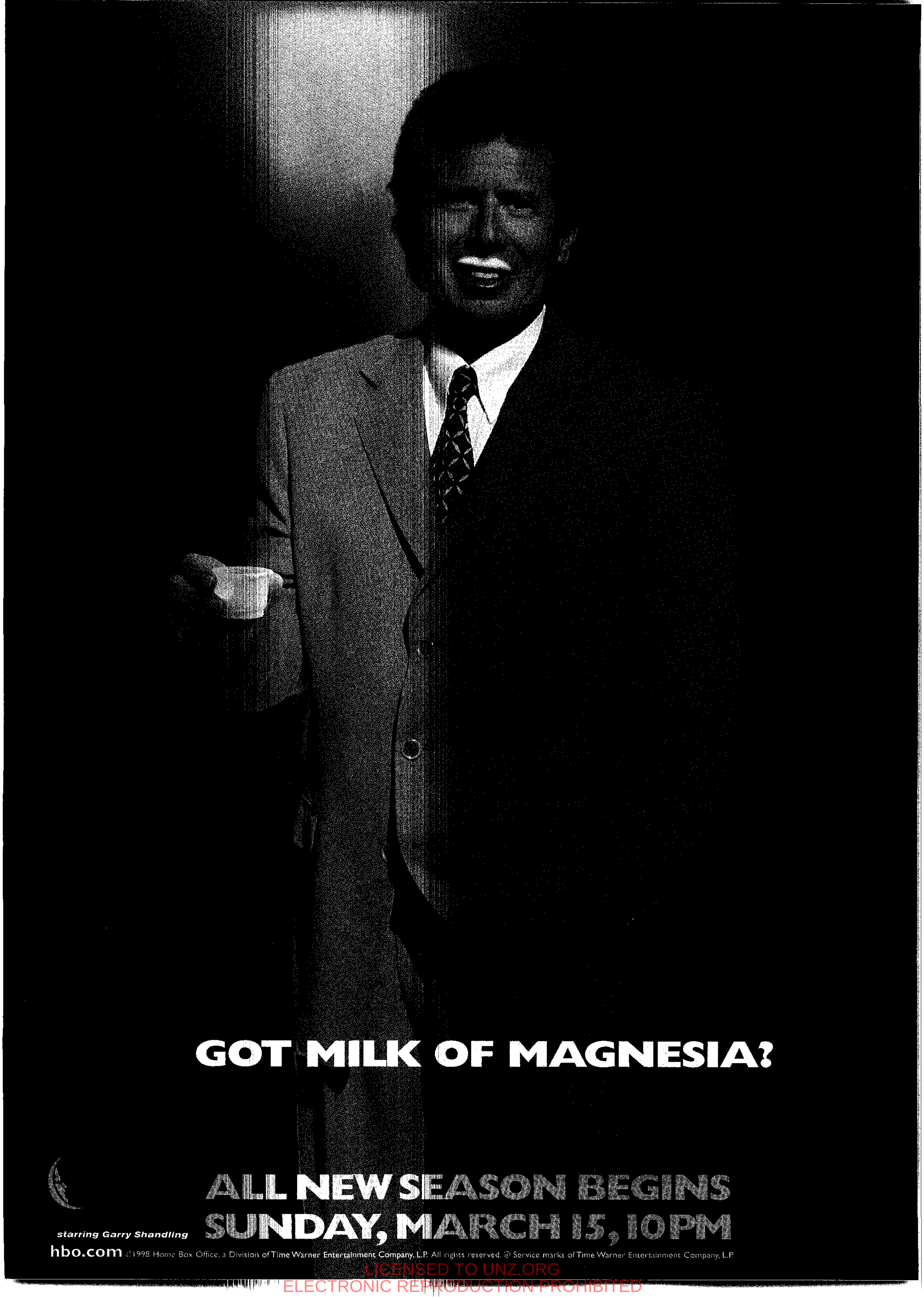
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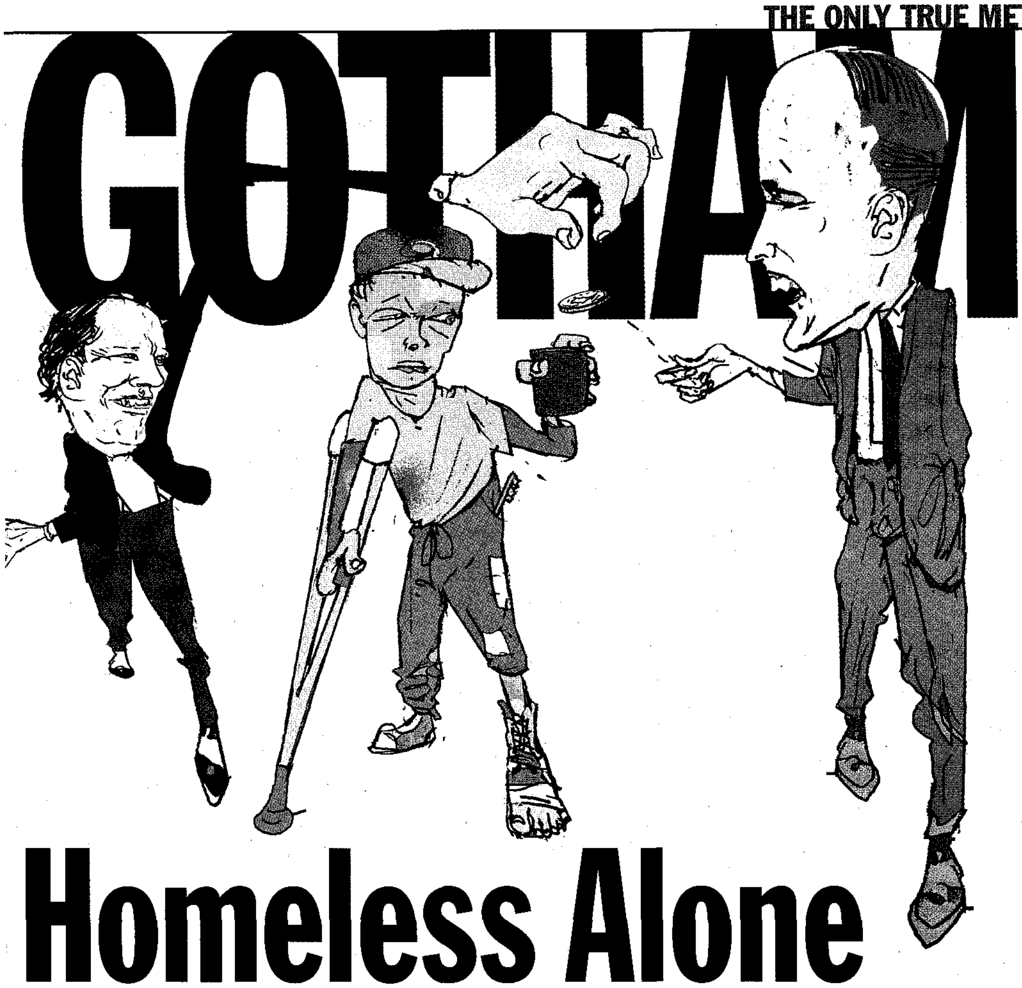


Homeless Alone

Why won't the governor go Dutch on a program that really works?

“It's extraordinarily frustrating,” says Mary Brosnahan of the Coalition for the Homeless. “It seems so obvious.” She's trying to explain why—at a time when state and city coffers are flush with surplus tax dollars and an election is just around the corner—the one program that's been proven to get the hard-core homeless off the streets cheaply and effectively hasn't been renewed. Known as the New York/New York Agreement, and praised by advocates and politicians across the board, it looks on paper like a shoo-in for funding. But its continuation requires that Governor Pataki pay half of its relatively paltry cost, and to date, the governor has given no indication that he plans to contribute a penny.

The program, drawn up by David Dinkins and Mario Cuomo, has created inexpensive homes for 8,370 mentally ill New Yorkers. An astonishing 84 percent of those served by the program have stayed off the street, living in the New York/New York units or moving on to other apartments. But even a record like that and money on the table—the city has already budgeted $85 million to build more of the housing—aren't enough to keep the program alive. The city won't do anything unless the state matches its allocation. “We have always maintained that we weren't going to do these programs by ourselves,” says one city official. “Because once you start down that path and you say, ‘Well, all right, we'll pay for it,’ then the state feels that they don't have to pay for anything.”

“So far there has been silence from the governor's office,” says James Brennan, who chairs the

(continued on page 16)

SCRAPBOOK

The Wit and Wisdom of Abe Hirschfeld

Excerpts from his current comedy routine.

- Hello, good evening, everybody. It's so nice to be with you and such a change from what I had today . . . you see that I'm specially dressed . . . not for you! I just came from heaven. . . . You see, for Jews to call God is a local call.
- Resurrecting the New York *Post* was my biggest success. Editors all ask me, “Do you know how to write?” I said yes. They said, “What kind of writing do you do?” I said, “All I write is checks.”
- The *Daily News* has become so jealous . . . they're changing editors more often than Donald Trump changes wives.
- I figured out Jesus Christ could not have been Jewish. He went for the Last Supper, but if He'd been Jewish, He'd have gone for the early-bird special.
- How did I develop the idea of an open-air garage? Because cars don't catch cold in winter.
- Why did God create Gentiles? Because we Jews needed someone to buy retail.

CAMEO

After Him, the Deluge

Several hundred young girls crushed up against the barricades, screaming, crying, and desperate. If you didn't know it was Leonardo's latest premiere, you could have mistaken it for a scene from some sweet bygone era when girls in knee socks ran out onto the tarmac to meet their heroes' planes. But unlike those old matinee idols, he wasn't playing his part. “Leonardo's not being photographed,” beleaguered publicists repeated all week long, as he nonetheless made himself quite visible, eating at high-profile restaurants and installing himself at the center of his own teeming party. Dignitaries, celebrities, and overindulged teenyboppers alike clustered around for a chance to gaze upon his lovely form. “This guy's a Jesus Christ for our time,” said magician David Blaine. Offering a more likely explanation for the phenomenon, Ivanka Trump said, “Of course I'm in love with Leo, but I'm an adolescent, so it should be expected.”

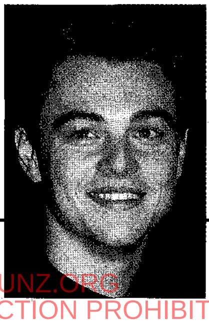


Illustration by Istvan Banyai. Photograph by Sylvia Norris/Globe Photos.

Mental *continued from page 15*

State Assembly's mental-health committee.

Despite the distance, literal and figurative, between Albany and New York City, the governor does have some incentive to fund this program. Like the mayor, he is rumored to be preparing for the national stage, and he can't afford to alienate any constituency. "New York City residents do not want to see homeless people all over the streets again," warns political consultant Hank Scheinkopf. "They'll blame George Pataki."

As it is, after declining for several years, the homeless population is rising again. Encampments are sprouting up around town, and local shelters are filling up. Up till now, Pataki's work in the field of mental health has been heavily influenced by pork-barrel politics: To protect jobs upstate, he has left 29 ridiculously overstaffed mental institutions open, soaking up 70 percent of the mental-health budget to serve just 3 percent of the state's mentally ill. Scheinkopf sees that record as a new liability: "The rumor is that George Pataki would make a wonderful vice-presidential candidate. It's not in his interest to portray himself in an election year as someone completely lacking in compassion. He can't afford to have that kind of baggage."

Homeless advocates want to make sure the governor understands how their interests and his converge, and so 102 city social-service agencies have formed a lobbying coalition. On Wednesday, 300 supporters, including many New York/New York clients, will travel to Albany to meet with the city's entire delegation and hold a public rally. "Things are going to play out very quickly over the next couple of weeks," says Brosnahan.

Many of the protesters have undertaken the journey in the past, but this time, they say, the fate of the program is uniquely urgent. "New York City leads the nation in this stuff now," says Cynthia Stuart of the Corporation for Supportive Housing. "New York really knows what it's doing, and it's just criminal not to have some money to back that up." MICHAEL STEELE

SPORTS

Crying Foul

Ref gives the NBA a full-court press.

SANDRA ORTIZ–DEL VALLE is about as big a basketball fan as anyone's likely to meet, as well as a champion of women's rights. But last October, when people inside the sport and out celebrated the news that the National Basketball Association had hired Dee Kantner and Violet Palmer as its first two female referees, she didn't consider it a victory for equality or the dawning of a new era in professional athletics. She considered it a cynical ploy to undercut her million-dollar gender-discrimination suit against the NBA, which declined to hire her as a ref despite her seventeen years of experience with other pro and semi-pro leagues and the numerous awards she has won.

Basketball referee Sandra Ortiz–Del Valle.

The case comes to trial March 30 in Manhattan's U.S. Southern District Court.

The NBA won't say much about why they didn't hire her, or why they did hire Kantner and Palmer mere days before Ortiz–Del Valle's case was originally scheduled to begin, but they dismiss the suggestion that the women are being used as pawns. "They met the standards," says executive vice-president Jeff Mishkin, "and Sandra Ortiz–Del Valle did not." Neither of the new hires will speak about the trial, for which they have both been listed as witnesses for the defense.

But Ortiz–Del Valle, whose uniform hangs on permanent display at the Basketball Hall of Fame, says she can't help feeling "as if I prepared this big meal, and Dee Kantner and Violet Palmer are feasting on it."

Since she brought her suit, all her refereeing jobs with other leagues have mysteriously dried up, too. Nevertheless, she has rejected the NBA's settlement offers (first $25,000, then $75,000) in favor of her day in court. A lawyer with knowledge of the case calls that a bad strategy—"Whatever damages she could get are, at best, kindly characterized as chump change," he says—but her perseverance has won her the admiration of many female refs. "I think she's put a charge of dynamite in that old-boy foundation," says Yvonne Maxwell, a referee for 27 years.

Despite the praise, Ortiz–Del Valle is just trying to keep her eye on the ball. "I didn't want to become a trailblazer," she says. "I just want to be an NBA referee."

BARBARA CAMPBELL

PUBLISHING

Rudy's Grim Fairy Tales

The literary world is abuzz with the recent news that Mayor Giuliani is working on a children's book. Early reports indicate that the book will be a career guide for kids, but can the mayor really resist the opportunity to further his political agenda? The possibilities are endless. GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

● LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

. . . Carrying the basket of food, Riding Hood set out through the woods to her grandmother's house. After a while, she stepped off the path to pick some wildflowers.

Couldn't she read?

The sign said REMAIN ON PATH.

And what was Grandmother doing relying on handouts, anyway?

● COCK ROBIN

Who killed Cock Robin?
I don't know,
But if you bother to do your research,
I think you'll find that it happened
During the Dinkins administration.
The facts will show this.

● THE OLD WOMAN IN A SHOE

There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe.
That's since been taken care of.

● GOODNIGHT, MOON

Goodnight, moon.
I said: "Goodnight, moon."
Moon!

Moon, what do we say when someone says good night to us?

Maybe those two officers over there can teach you something about civility.

● THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

. . . And the hare woke up and sped for the finish line. It was too late. "Slow and steady wins the race," said the tortoise.

The tortoise was declared the winner by all the other animals. Additionally, the reckless hare, who had been clocked at 32 m.p.h. by a speed trap, was fined $150, plus points.

● SING A SONG OF SIXPENCE

Sing a song of sixpence—
On second thought,
May I see your cabaret license?

● COUNTRY MOUSE, CITY MOUSE

. . . So the country mouse lived happily ever after in the country, and the city mouse lived happily ever after in the city. But the city mouse could still kick the country mouse's ass.

Photographs: top, Amilcar; bottom, Frances M. Roberts.

MEDIA

TIME CAPSULE

The entire century turned out for Time's *75th. And you weren't invited.*

WITH THREE HOURS TO go and 400 racks of lamb still to be sliced before *Time's* seventy-fifth-anniversary gala commences, editor Walter Isaacson is trying to remain circumspect. "It's such a mix of people. I don't think it's . . . well, you do the superlatives. But it may be the party of . . . *whatever*." As the hour draws nigh, however, it becomes hard for him to stay detached. "I didn't believe it was all going to happen until yesterday," he confesses, "when David Neslen came here from White House Advance and said, 'Okay, walk me through where the president is supposed to come in.' I finally said, 'Okay, I guess it is going to happen.' "

Still, it's only when the 1,100 guests start showing up at 6 P.M. that it really sinks in. These are no ordinary party folk, after all; they are people whom Hegel would have referred to—had he been a publicist, say—as "world-historical individuals." Among them are almost 100 people who've been featured on the magazine's cover: Men of the Year, sports heroes, revolutionaries, statesmen, moguls, and artists.

The sight of all these stars from barely overlapping solar systems, now briefly occupying the same orbit, makes for some serious cognitive dissonance. Jerry Falwell strolls past Toni Morrison, who strolls past Donald Trump, who strolls past Nancy Kerrigan, who strolls past Ralph Nader, who strolls past Carol Channing. "It's like one of those upended cornucopias of stars they used to put on the old photo magazines," says the inevitable Dick Cavett.

It's not just a bigger, better version of the usual celebrity event, however. Even the frequent comparisons to Truman Capote's Black and White Ball fall short. That gala of socialites and power brokers was fueled by its sense of exclusivity. ("It didn't occur to me to crash, and it didn't occur to him to invite me," recalls Barbara Walters.) The door policy here is no less strict, but the feeling inside is quite different: It's cacophonous and uncontainable, full of cameras and spotlights and loudspeakers. The effect is oddly democratic, like a convention of the entire celebrity class where everyone has equal mingling rights and no juxtaposition, however unlikely, is inappropriate.

From top: John Glenn, President Clinton, Toni Morrison, and Gerald Levin; Raquel Welch, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Mary Tyler Moore; Toni Morrison with Elie Weisel and Anita Hill with Lauren Bacall.

Henry Kissinger rumbles over, eager to meet Tom Cruise ("My God, Tom, who the hell is that?" Nicole Kidman whispers). Raquel Welch, standing with Mary Tyler Moore, thanks Mikhail Gorbachev "for everything you did for Russia." He can't quite place her face—but he warmly takes Moore's hand. "Oh, yes," he says, "we know the shows. We have seen quite a few American movies."

Interrupting a chat with Molly Ringwald, Jay McInerney gives Kofi Annan his props. "Thanks a lot, man," he tells the diplomat. "You saved us all."

But the fraternity among deities can't erase all the past conflicts. When the room rises in thundering applause for Muhammad Ali, a stone-faced Louis Farrakhan—whom Ali once denounced—stays seated. No sourpuss, though, Farrakhan gives it up for Betty Friedan.

And, of course, some celebrities are still more equal than others. The VIP-est VIPs, such as President Clinton, Isaacson, or Gerald Levin, sit near the front of the stage, eating food prepared in a special kitchen and inspected by flashlight-wielding Secret Service agents. "All I got was Cheryl Tiegs, her yogi boyfriend, and six guys I never heard of," complains "Page Six" editor Richard Johnson.

After the dinner is cleared, the toasts begin, and the speakers, paying tribute to their heroes and leaders, summon the entire sweep of the past 75 years. Seeing Joe DiMaggio as he listens beside Henry Kissinger, Billy Graham, John Glenn, and Lauren Bacall, one expects to find Mao Zedong in the next seat, or Indira Gandhi, or Marilyn Monroe, or Henry Luce himself. The collective effect of the charmed company, the living history, and the stunning décor—not to mention all the white wine—is intoxicating.

By the time Clinton rises to praise Franklin Delano Roosevelt, it really has become the party of the century. Not the biggest or most memorable, though it has to be a contender, but the one that celebrates the century itself—even embodies it, through the people represented in the flesh and those they in turn invoked. It is all, of course, skillfully constructed (as parties are these days, especially $3 million ones) to convey the felicitous impression that *Time* not only recorded the history of those years but actually helped to produce it. And, of course, the ancillary impression: that if this many newsmakers come to your birthday party, you can be counted on to be where it's happening as the next century unfolds.

Not everyone is finding the road ahead so easy to travel, however. As the evening draws to a close, limousines clog the street for blocks. Bill Gates, the richest man alive, can't even find his car. After waiting in vain for half an hour, he finally gives up and hails a taxi.

ALEX WILLIAMS

Additional reporting by Vanessa Grigoriadis.

Photographs by Patrick McMullan.

RAT CITY

PERIODIC DISPATCHES FROM THE WAR ON VERMIN

RuPaul Among the Rodents

IN A CITY STRIATED BY EVERY conceivable factor—race, class, fabulousness—rats might just rank as the one great equalizer, as unavoidable a fact of life for the beautiful people as they are for mere mortals.

Consider, for example, the midnight ride of the mighty RuPaul. One recent night, he and his friend P. J. Jones hopped on their bikes and went exploring lower Manhattan. Around 2 A.M., down by the Brooklyn Bridge, they turned onto an alley between McDonald's and J&R Music World.

"As soon as I smelled where we were headed," recounts P.J., "I knew it was a bad idea." But it was too late. They were riding into a mountain of garbage—some from the electronics store, some from the restaurant. "We were surrounded by rats," says P.J. "Hundreds."

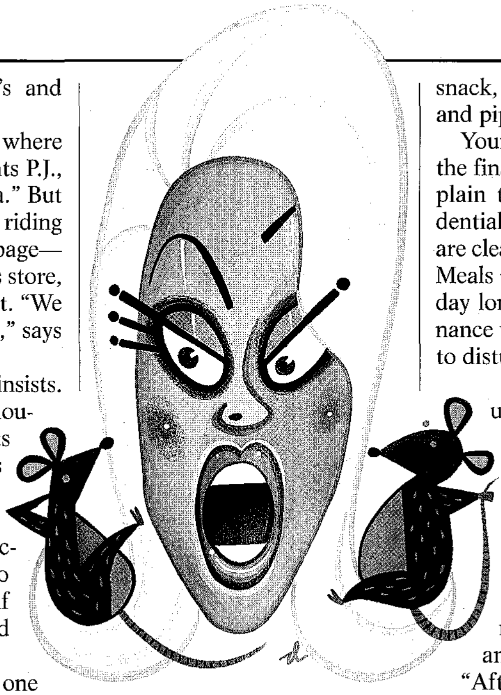
"A thousand," RuPaul insists. "I'm being realistic. A thousand huge rats. The rats were touching our feet as we biked. The rats were screaming and jumping in the air—literally bouncing off the walls trying to get away from us. But if we had fallen, they would have killed us both."

"We call it Rat Alley," one J&R salesman explains. "The boxes all come in nibbled on." The astonishing rodent population is visible even in daylight hours. Visit and you'll see them out taking the air, enjoying a snack, and shimmying up walls and pipes.

Young professionals living in the financial district often complain that the area lacks residential comforts, but these rats are clearly in pig heaven. Happy Meals are delivered to them all day long, and even the maintenance workers are too horrified to disturb them.

To some, an unscheduled visit to this community of urban vermin pioneers could have been a major life trauma. But RuPaul chooses to look on the bright side: "If I can conquer my deepest fear by running the rat gauntlet, I can do anything."

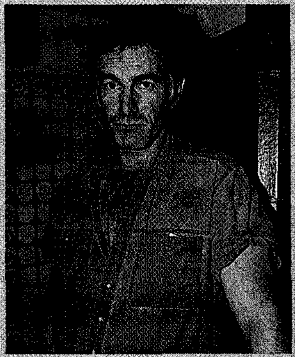
"After all," he muses, "we live in a city of rats. *We're* the subculture. It's sort of freeing to realize." KATE AURTHUR



THE SCENE

Boys on Film

Photographs by Patrick McMullan

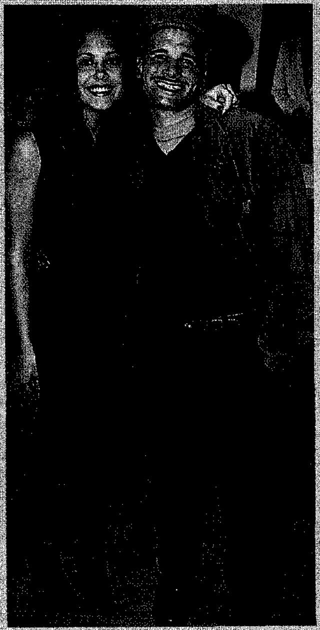


John Sayles celebrates the opening of his new movie, *Men With Guns*, with a party at Helena's hosted by Max Racks.

PolyGram's John Kennedy with Luciano Pavarotti and Danny Goldberg at the Waldorf-Astoria, where Pavarotti was named Music Cares Person of the Year.

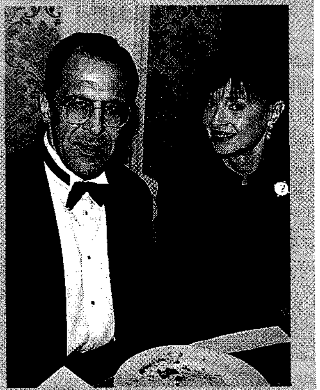
At MOMA for the presentation of the 1998 David Rockefeller Award, honoree Katharine Graham and Rockefeller.

John Malkovich, Val Kilmer, and Jaycee Gossett at the party for MGM's *The Man in the Iron Mask*, held at the Ziegfield Theater.



At Saks Fifth Avenue, Samantha Cole and celebrity stylist Phillip Bloch celebrating the publication of his new book, *Elements of Style*.

Patricia Field at the party following the premiere of Manuel Toledano's film *Shampoo Horns*.



Russian ambassador Sergei Lavrov and Princess Elizabeth of Yugoslavia at a benefit for the princess's foundation and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Illustration by Robert de Michiell.

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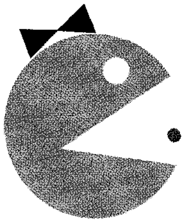
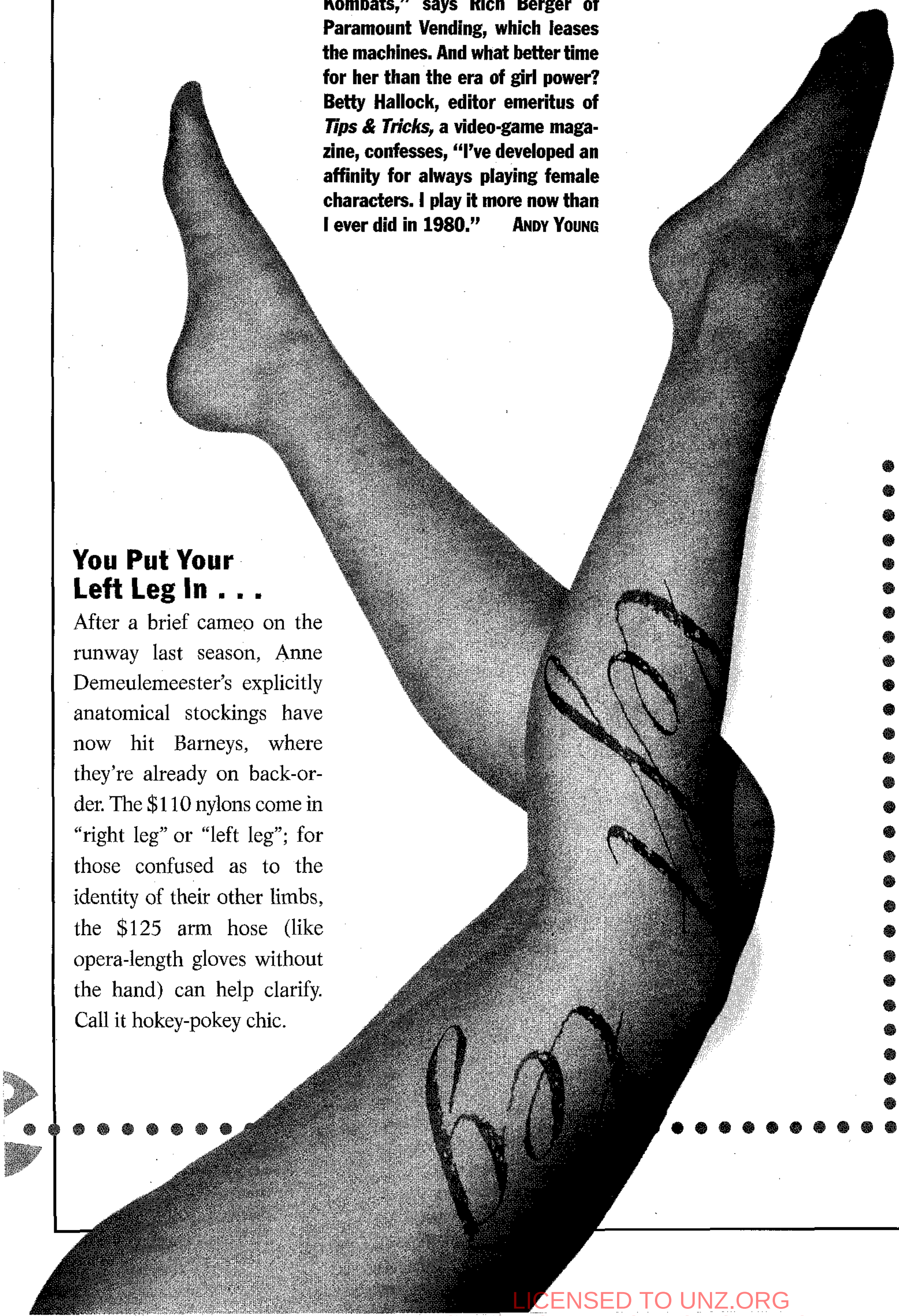
GOTHAMSTYLE

EDITED BY DANY LEVY

Little. Yellow. Different.



She may always be a simple wheel of Cheddar to some, but Ms. Pac-Man—that proto-feminist iconette of yesteryear—is undergoing a second-wave renaissance. She's recently installed herself in trendy haunts from the Diesel superstore to the Upper West Side's P & G Cafe and SoHo's Void, as well as in such Ur–New York sites as the Pussycat Lounge and the Chinatown Fair ticktacktoe-chicken arcade. "The older games are making a revival. People are sick of the Mortal Kombats," says Rich Berger of Paramount Vending, which leases the machines. And what better time for her than the era of girl power? Betty Hallock, editor emeritus of *Tips & Tricks,* a video-game magazine, confesses, "I've developed an affinity for always playing female characters. I play it more now than I ever did in 1980." ANDY YOUNG



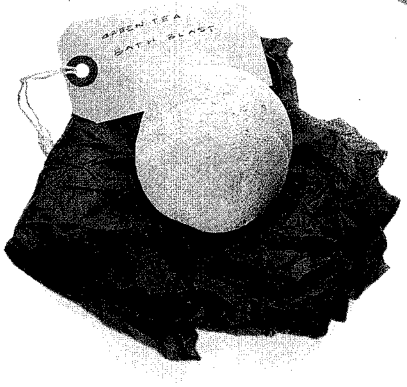
You Put Your Left Leg In . . .

After a brief cameo on the runway last season, Anne Demeulemeester's explicitly anatomical stockings have now hit Barneys, where they're already on back-order. The $110 nylons come in "right leg" or "left leg"; for those confused as to the identity of their other limbs, the $125 arm hose (like opera-length gloves without the hand) can help clarify. Call it hokey-pokey chic.

BODY TYPE

Mental Gymnastics

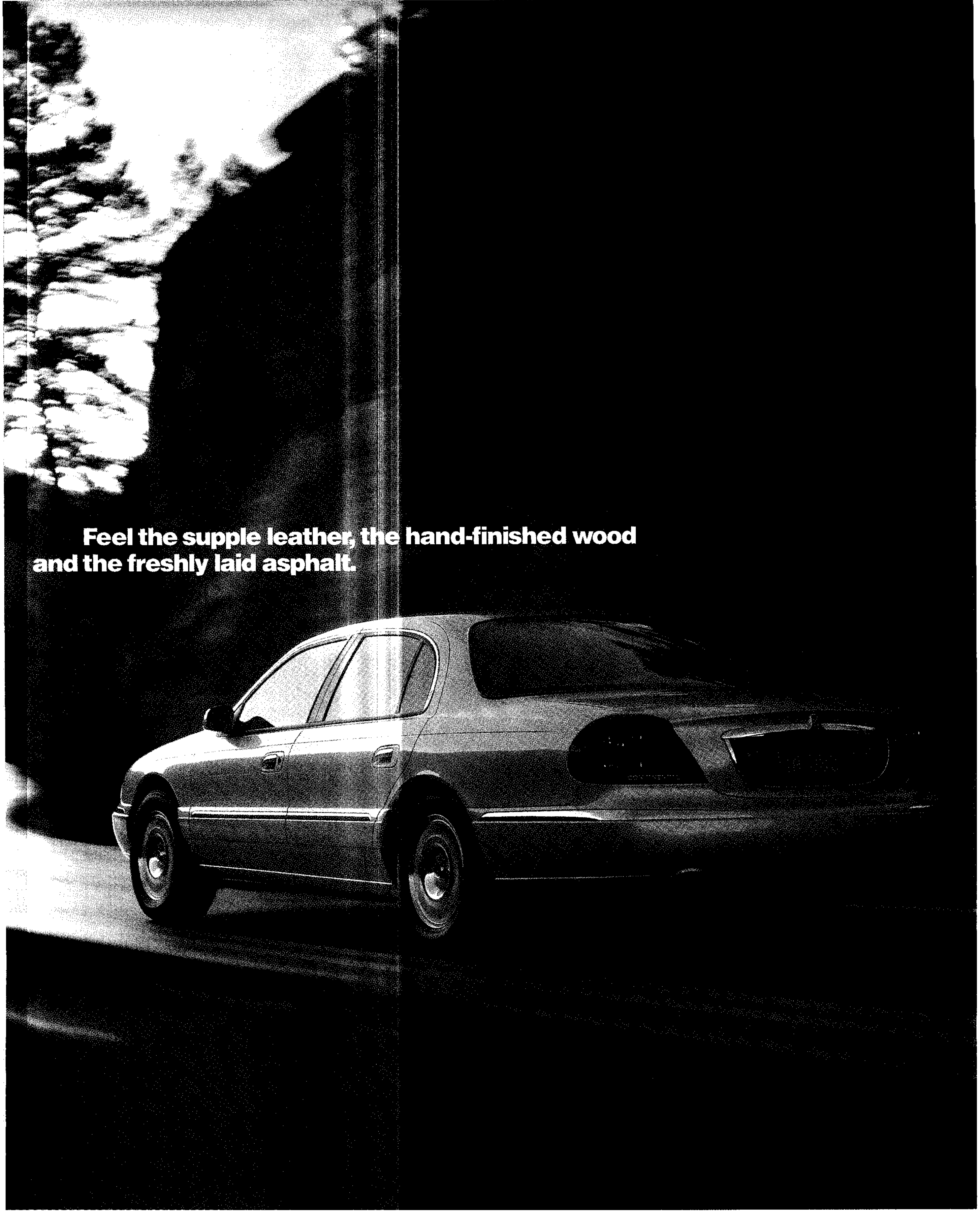
● Taking the mind-body connection to a whole new level of administrative oversight, the Goodson Parker Wellness Center on 76th Street allows clients interested in Pilates exercise classes to start with a psychological examination. Dr. DeAnsin Parker, a Jungian psychoanalyst, believes that questions such as "In reading for pleasure, do you enjoy odd or original ways of saying things, or like writers to say exactly what they mean?" provide a useful guide to designing the right workout. "You're trying to find out how a person operates both with himself and with others," explains Parker. "It is important that instruction be delivered in a way that will naturally make the client responsive and will make the most sense." So introverts—the theory goes—might respond better to visualization than to a very demanding trainer. Updating the proverb just a bit, Parker says, "Your body is merely the house for your personality." BETH LANDMAN KEIL



Plop, Plop, Fizz, Fizz

To many fashionable Americans visiting London, a trip to Lush counts as something of a holy pilgrimage. The store's handmade cosmetics—such as a baseball-size bath bead that functions like a giant Alka-Seltzer tablet (or an instant Jacuzzi) when submerged—just never made it across the Atlantic, except in individual bulging suitcases. But the perfect bath no longer requires a ticket to Heathrow: Hudson Dry Goods offers a fine substitute called Primal Elements Bath Blasts, available for $7.50 apiece.

Photographs: left, Kristine Larsen; right, Steve Wisbauer.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THE CITY POLITIC MICHAEL TOMASKY

Uncivil Discourse

That New Yorkers are good-hearted, helpful, considerate, civic-minded, and sunny-tempered (well, sometimes) seems to be news only to our own Mayor Rapknuckles.

I MOVED TO NEW YORK IN MAY 1985. My parents drove me up from our home in West Virginia (though I had lived in Washington, D.C., before moving here), a U-Haul trailer loaded with the usual graduate student's possessions hitched to the back of my father's Buick Estate Wagon. When we pulled up in front of my apartment building in Sheepshead Bay, Dad and I saw that the linchpin, bounced and jostled by 400 miles of aging, rutted asphalt, had gone about nine tenths of the way toward coming off, and we looked at each other, at once laughing and shuddering at the thought of our hitch flying loose, oh, just as we were reaching the crest of the Verrazano Narrows Bridge.

Logistically speaking, the idea of the move had seemed nightmarish. How does one find an apartment in New York? Get the phone hooked up? Start banking? The same way one does them anywhere else, of course, except that New York just seemed so terrifying and indecipherable that surely completing even these obvious tasks successfully required some special knowledge. I'd visited the city many times, going back to the 1964 World's Fair, but still I believed, as I'm sure students moving to New York for the first time believe today, that actually living here, relying solely and without alternative on New Yorkers for human contact, would demand reserves of patience and skill that a childhood spent in Morgantown, West Virginia, would have done little to deepen.

Have a nice day! The city isn't *only* about putting up with nuisances, nastiness, and noise.

Somehow, the nightmare failed to materialize. A real-estate agent, the charming, voluble mother of a college friend, had found me a cracking good apartment. The landlords, a young couple who lived on Long Island, trusted the agent as to my character—of which, in truth, she knew nothing—and welcomed me. The woman at New York Telephone, a Mrs. Perez, I believe, set me up with service and concluded our conversation by smiling broadly and saying, "Welcome to New York City." The bank clerk delivered the unhappy news that my father's check, which was to sustain me for a while, would not clear for several days, emanating as it did from this strange jurisdiction, but she did so sympathetically. The man at the U-Haul shop on Coney Island Avenue had locked up just before my father and I pulled in to drop off the trailer, but after my father explained our circumstances (and greased his palm lightly), he swung the gates open.

Also that first night, my folks and I went to the local pizza parlor on Avenue U. Two hours later, back in the apartment, my mother realized that her watch, which she'd had for twenty years or so, was missing. She thought she might have left it in the pizza place, in which case it would obviously have already been converted to cash for some drug transaction on one of the meaner streets. Mom being near tears, though, I walked down to inquire. Sure enough, the man had it. "I'm so glad you come-a back," he said.

Aberrant, stupid luck, all of it? I thought so at the time, and certainly the tabloids, which treat good deeds as miracles and need the story line of the surly, uncaring city to sustain themselves, would say it was. But today, twelve years later and with New York deep in my bones and nerve-ends, I realize that what happened to me was perfectly normal. The other day, I watched from a distance as an elderly woman dropped a boxful of silver dollars on the street at Park and 59th. First one, then two, then eventually four people stopped to help her gather them up. And I thought again what I thought in those first few days I spent here and have thought, more or less, ever since: New Yorkers, as ridiculous as it sounds, are very nice people.

THAT THE MAYOR SEEMS to be coming unhinged—remember the scene in *Bananas* when the revolutionary leader, having taken over the palace, decrees that henceforth on Fridays, people will wear their underwear outside their pants?—is very

Photograph from FPG.

nearly beyond question. For him, quality of life cannot grow from negotiation or cajolery; rather, and not surprisingly, it is something to be codified and litigated and, most of all, enforced—except, of course, when he turns out to be the perp, as when *Daily News* columnist Michael Daly caught him busting various speed limits a dozen times a couple of weeks ago. When that happens, there are excuses and, as ever with Rudy Giuliani, recriminations.

But I haven't found myself persuaded by many of his critics either. The tone of much of the coverage of the mayor's civility campaign can be boiled down to three words: *Good luck, pal.* The idea that New Yorkers are barely human is funny sometimes—certainly, it's reliable shtick, just like the behavior of the waiters at Peter Luger's or the counter people at the Carnegie Deli. But is it true? And even if it is, do New Yorkers really need a lecture on civil behavior from, of all people, Rudy "My city can kick your city's ass" Giuliani?

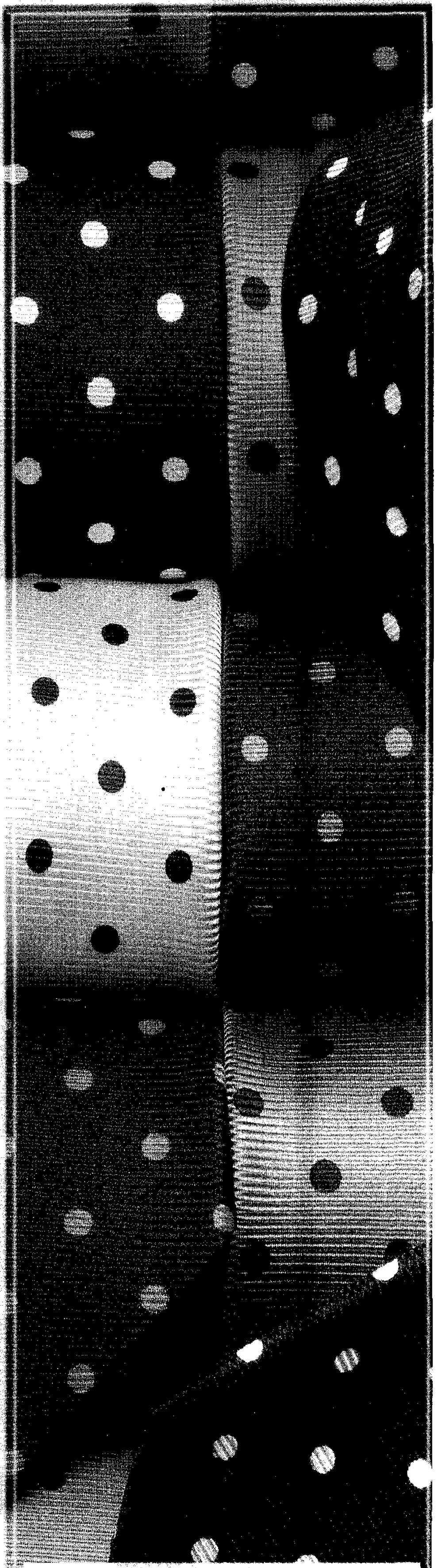
I recognize that to say New Yorkers are nice is not to say that the city is a civil place. E. B. White, in his essay "Here Is New York," averred that each of us has about eighteen inches of space here at any given moment. When you squeeze people that tightly, irascibility is the inevitable result. Put otherwise well-tempered people behind the wheel of a car in gasping traffic or at a feverishly busy crosswalk, for example, and they will sometimes turn into maniacs (the problem isn't jaywalking, however; it's people dashing across the street against a green light as if they were seizing a last chance to make a midnight run across the border). In other cities, drivers actually apply their brakes and wave other cars into traffic.

Sure, it would be nice if we could slow the pace and lower the volume generally. But New Yorkers have been behaving this way for 300 years. "The thing about New York," says Columbia history professor Kenneth T. Jackson (Memphian by birth, New Yorker by choice), "is that it was not created to be any kind of city on a hill, with any higher purpose. It was created to make money." People who make money by the millions can do so decorously, by huddling with accountants in private rooms. People who make it by the dollar, though, have to scrape and hustle, and sometimes very nastily.

And so visitors from John Adams to Henry James and a thousand others have cursed the city, as have many natives—for Herman Melville, New York was a "Babylonish brick-kiln" to which the penniless author had to return from time to time to secure employment. It's probably not an accident that a lot of that animus focused on the Lower East Side; describing New York's crudenesses, in other words, meant for many of these observers describing its immigrants and its poor. But those being observed found a way to flourish, and their descendants, some of whom grew up to become Borscht Belt comics, made it out to Long Island and up to Westchester, learned to laugh at the old put-downs and the habits of life that produced them, and, through Sullivan and Carson, made America laugh with them (Jackson reminded me of a great old joke: *Pardon me, sir, can you tell me the way to Times Square, or shall I just go fuck myself?*).

The days of the great Jewish comics were New York's glory days, the era Giuliani invokes when he talks about a social compact that no longer exists. He may be right about that. But a social compact, as this grad student could have told you thirteen years ago, is made not just among citizens but between citizens and their government, and in the forties and fifties, New York City educated and employed and comforted people rather more diligently than it does now. The incidence of jaywalking is one way to measure civility; the good repair of school buildings, the construction of projects for public enjoyment, and the steady flow of new books to the branch libraries are others.

Under the circumstances that prevail here, most New Yorkers are remarkably forgiving and even polite—and probably always have been. Again, White: "The city has to be tolerant, otherwise it would explode in a radioactive cloud of hate and rancor and bigotry. If the people were to depart even briefly from the peace of cosmopolitan intercourse, the town would blow up higher than a kite. In New York smolders every race problem there is, but the noticeable thing is not the problem but the inviolate truce." To an amazing and gratifying and very often amusing extent, that truce holds, irrespective of who's living in Gracie Mansion. Public rest rooms and working pay phones, to pick two small but vital examples, would do far more to strengthen it than lectures and picayune laws. Someday, a mayor will understand this. In the meantime, New Yorkers will carry on, complaining, of course, but finding strangers apartments, welcoming new customers to the city, opening gates after closing time, and holding on to lost watches.



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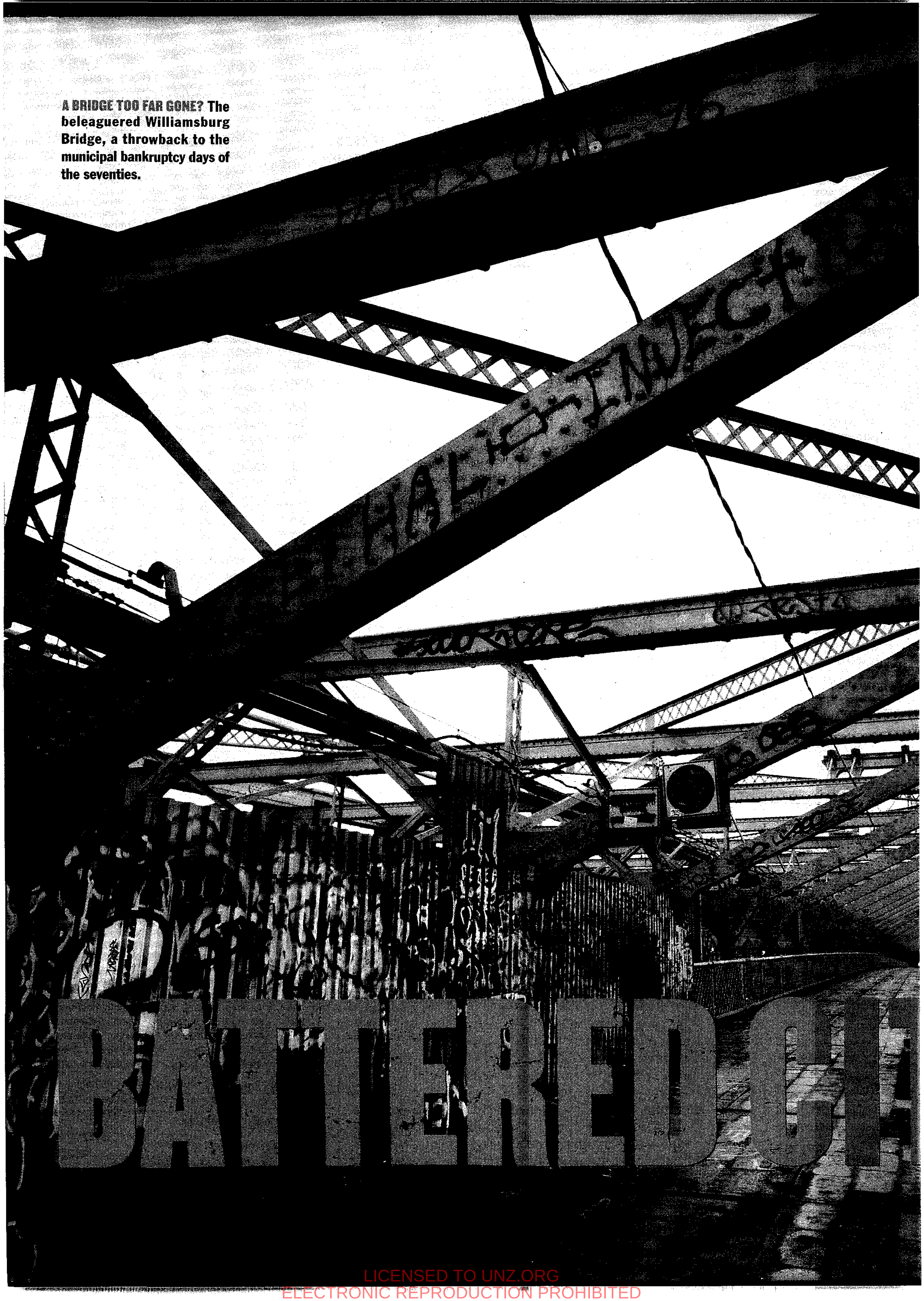
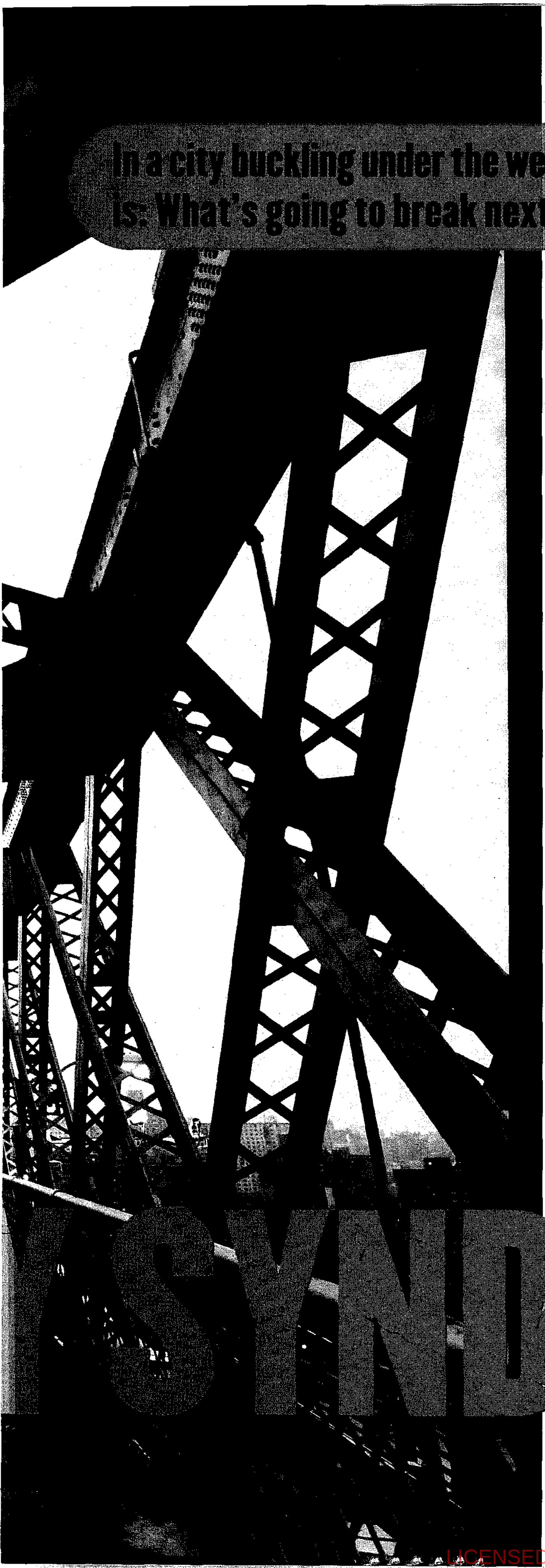


A BRIDGE TOO FAR GONE? The beleaguered Williamsburg Bridge, a throwback to the municipal bankruptcy days of the seventies.

BATTERED CI

In a city buckling under the weight of its own history, the question is: What's going to break next and when? A guide to urban decay.



YEARS AGO, WHILE FUNCTIONING AS A MOVING yellow blot of the city's infrastructure, I'd drive my taxi across the rusting "inner roadway" of the Williamsburg Bridge and wonder: When this corroded artifact of old New York collapses, will it be better to hit the water with the cab windows rolled up or down? ▲ Even now, a decade past its closure as a result of "major deterioration" and $800 million into a transport-snarling, lead-paint-flaking renovation, the less-than-stately Williamsburg, the world's longest bridge when it opened in 1903, still offers an unbeatable view of the urban apocalypse. One need only stroll onto the span's graffiti-dappled walkway (where Sonny Rollins once came to practice his saxophone because "no one else goes there") to see weathered façades of Manhattan buildings crack and crumble. Down they come, craggy-faced gargoyles and shiny sixties-era white bricks alike, splashing into streets flooded by breaks in century-old water mains. Below, the harbor silts up at an alarming rate, toxic sludge nipping at the Statue of Liberty's toes. Watch out! There go those nasty manhole covers again, blown sky-high by steam, flying down streets like deadly frisbees. Forget calling for help. Pay phones malfunction, sabotaged by their installers as part of a plot to make businessmen buy cellular. Except that now airwaves are clogged, a clear channel impossible to access. It's Babel, the cyber-squawk melding with the screech from the wheels of a J train that just missed an outmoded red signal out of Marcy Avenue station. And by the way, what's that

SYNDROME

BY MARK JACOBSON

PHOTOGRAPH BY BERND AUERS

smell? Or doesn't anthrax—or sarin, for that matter—smell?

All this is apparent from the walkway of the Williamsburg Bridge: the whole lovely ticking time bomb of a metropolis we call home.

New York's been here for 334 years, and has been breaking down for almost as long. The recent water-main break at Fifth Avenue and 19th Street, accompanied by the severing of a gas-line riser that sent forth a pillar of fire two stories high, was certainly flamboyant—but mains have broken in the Madison Square Park area many times before. In August 1983, it happened twice in two weeks, sparking the requisite biblical commentary in the newspapers. What else can a 120-year-old pipe constantly rattled by subway trains, buses and trucks do but break?

So the city will have to keep sending out its SWAT-team emergency crews to clean up the mess. Tomorrow it will be something else. Out in California they have earthquakes, floods, and mudslides: God's revenge. Here, disasters are man-made. The old infrastructure stalks us like a municipal Frankenstein.

"With so much falling down these days, the real drama of New York is what stays up. The city remains a Promethean wonder, a straddler of ages, unfinished and unfinishable."

PERSONALLY, I PREFER THAT MY INfrastructure just shut up and do its job. But this was not always the case. When I was growing up in Queens, my father bought me a copy of *Underneath New York*, by Harry Granick. How exciting it was to learn from Granick's stirring prose that in this most remarkable city yet concocted by man, the best stuff was beneath the surface—secret, like buried treasure.

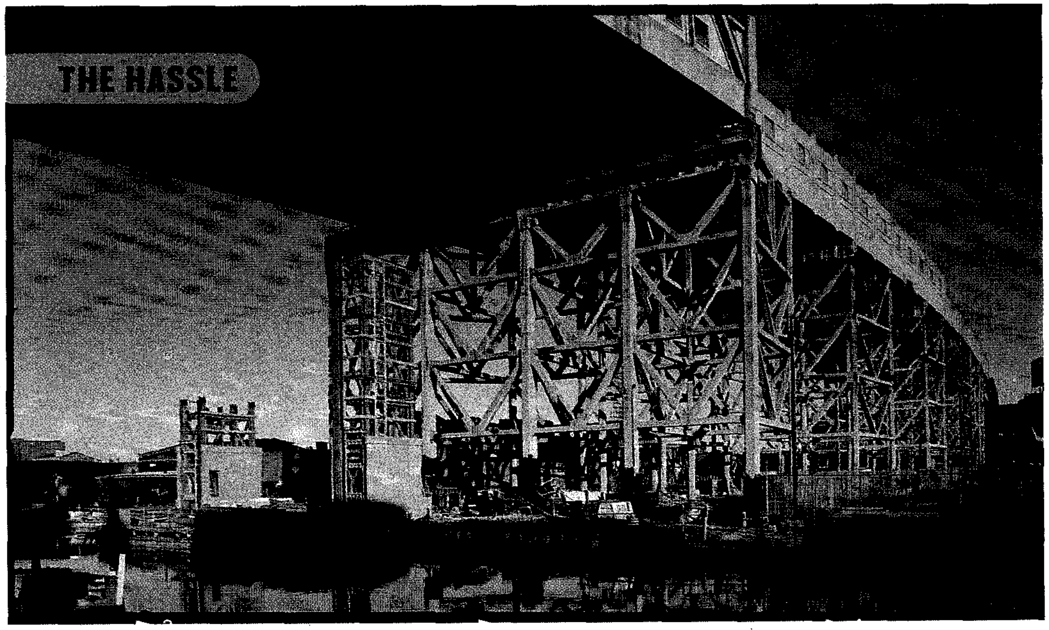
The city and myself were one, Granick pointed out. "For even as your brain, nerves, heart, lungs, and stomach are hidden from view, so it is with the city," he wrote. "Its intestines, which like yours, eliminate its wastes, and its great arteries of rapid transit, which like yours carry the stream of life to all ends of its body. . . ."

From Granick, I came to understand that while the Romans might have had a couple of okay ideas about aqueducts, it was only when New Yorkers opened the Croton system in 1842 (establishing a major reservoir at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street) that humanity truly mastered the means of distributing fresh, clean water. Civilization had culminated in this very place where I had the good fortune to be growing up. Back then, among the kids who lived, as I did, just a few blocks from the wistfully named Utopia Parkway, one of the most favored after-school activities was watching the construction of Robert Moses's Long Island Expressway. Once, it had been a commonplace six-lane boulevard named for Horace Harding, whoever that was. Now, it was a great horizontal vision of the future—running right through our little Queens neighborhood!

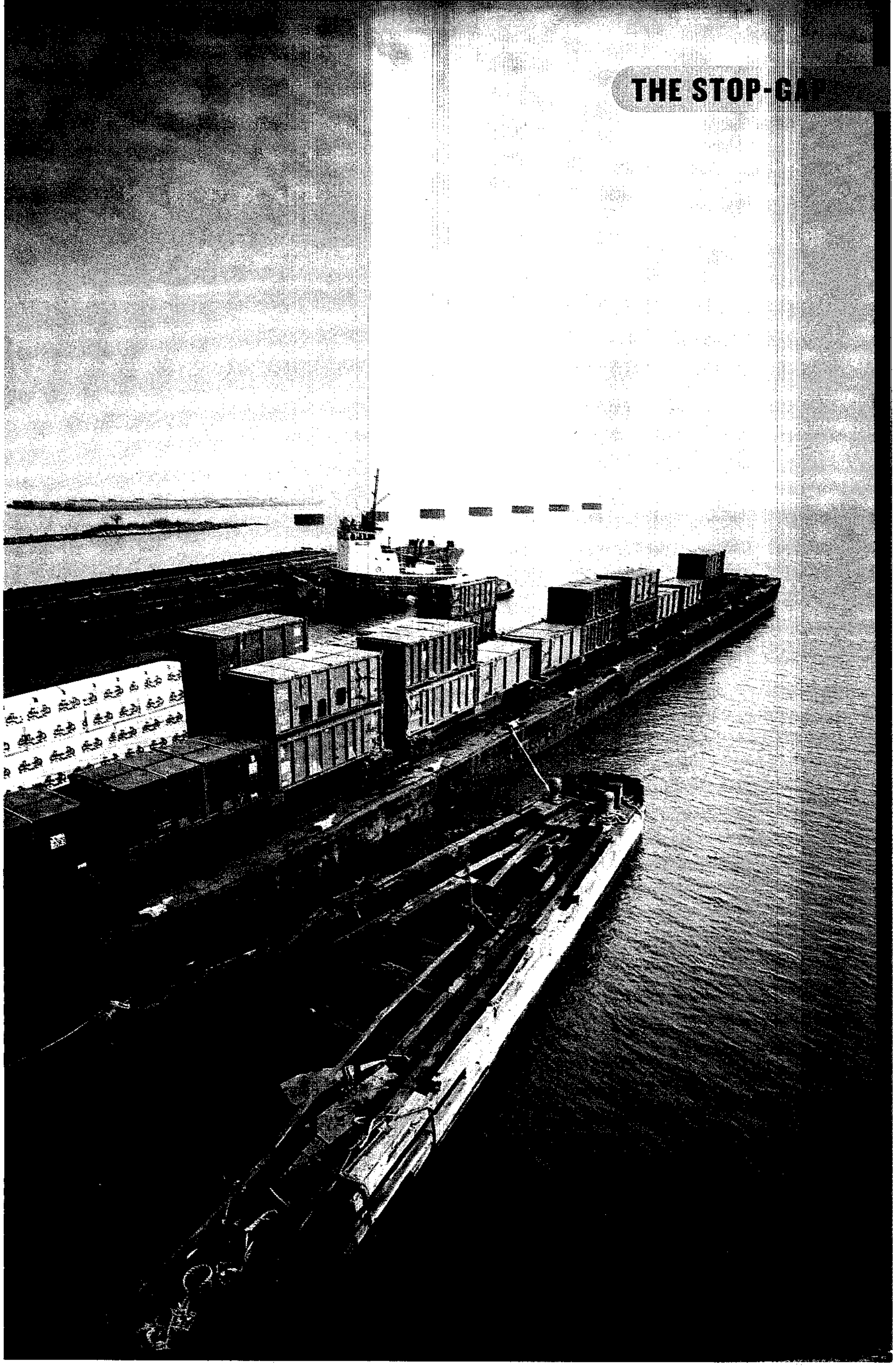
This sense of history was clinched in early 1960, as we stood on the shoulder of the newly opened expressway and were startled as Nikita Khrushchev, on his way to the Soviet enclave in Glen Cove, blew us a big kiss from his passing limo. How were we supposed to know that the L.I.E. would come to be "the world's longest parking lot," a hated zone that would trap people in their cars for hours, no doubt contributing to the outbreak of Buttafuoco-like behavior that would grip future residents of Nassau and Suffolk?

Thirty-five years later, this harried New Yorker still occasionally manages to hear the heroic strains of Aaron Copland as the F train trudges into the station. Even now, beyond the years of fiscal crisis and deferred maintenance, the beleaguered infrastructure continues to define this city. The Eiffel Tower is a nifty little erector set of a postcard backdrop, but what does it do? The Brooklyn Bridge is out there working every day, shouldering the load, kicking butt, all the more beautiful for its continuing utility. It's fantastic, really, to watch the stream of traffic cross that hallowed span, knowing that cars weren't even invented when Roebling sunk the first caissons. Still, the bridge stays up, an indestructible dream in stone and steel.

With so much falling down these days, this remains the real drama of New York: what stays up. What still works. Created primarily between 1870 and 1940—the greatest single period of technological change in history—physical New York was, and remains, a Promethean wonder, unique in the world. Los Angeles, secure as the fume-spewing epitome of the postwar automobile age, and Paris, neat repository of the past, are more like each other than New York is like either of them. Straddler of ages, New York is transtemporal, unfinished and unfinishable. The layered sweep of the modern age is exposed here, the way those old trolley tracks, ridden every day by your beloved immigrant grandmother, keep inching through the asphalt to mess up the tires of the family car. Therein, of course, is the problem. All this endless invention has left us cocksure cosmopoli-



Photograph by Jan Staller.



Left, the stressed 9th Street–Gowanus Canal Bridge, closed in 1994 after failing a safety test, is now undergoing an arduous renovation. Above, for want of a freight tunnel, rail container cars of human excrement wait near Brooklyn's 50th Street pier to be hauled across New York Bay on a barge.

tans with a city that often seems like a redneck's half-rebuilt engine, a jury-rigged mélange of mismatched spare parts that has to be babied to make it turn over. And if that doesn't work, maybe a good kick will.

Truth be told, when you go looking for the essence of New York City infrastructure, a dull throbbing headache—which will linger—comes on quick. There's just so much of the stuff, and so many people who want to tell you all about it. So you look for the symbolic, the defining place and thing. I found one the other day along the Brooklyn waterfront in Sunset Park. Fifty years ago, when New York Harbor (the first and still the most valuable piece of the city's infrastructure) was the busiest in the world, thousands of longshoremen worked these docks every day. But now, most of the piers, some damaged by fire, have rusted and fallen into the bay. This was the general setting as I stood on a dilapidated barge loaded with thirteen double-stacked rail container cars filled with what Greg Kisloff, public-relations officer of the New York Cross Harbor Railway, referred to as "human excrement, packed in a cakelike form."

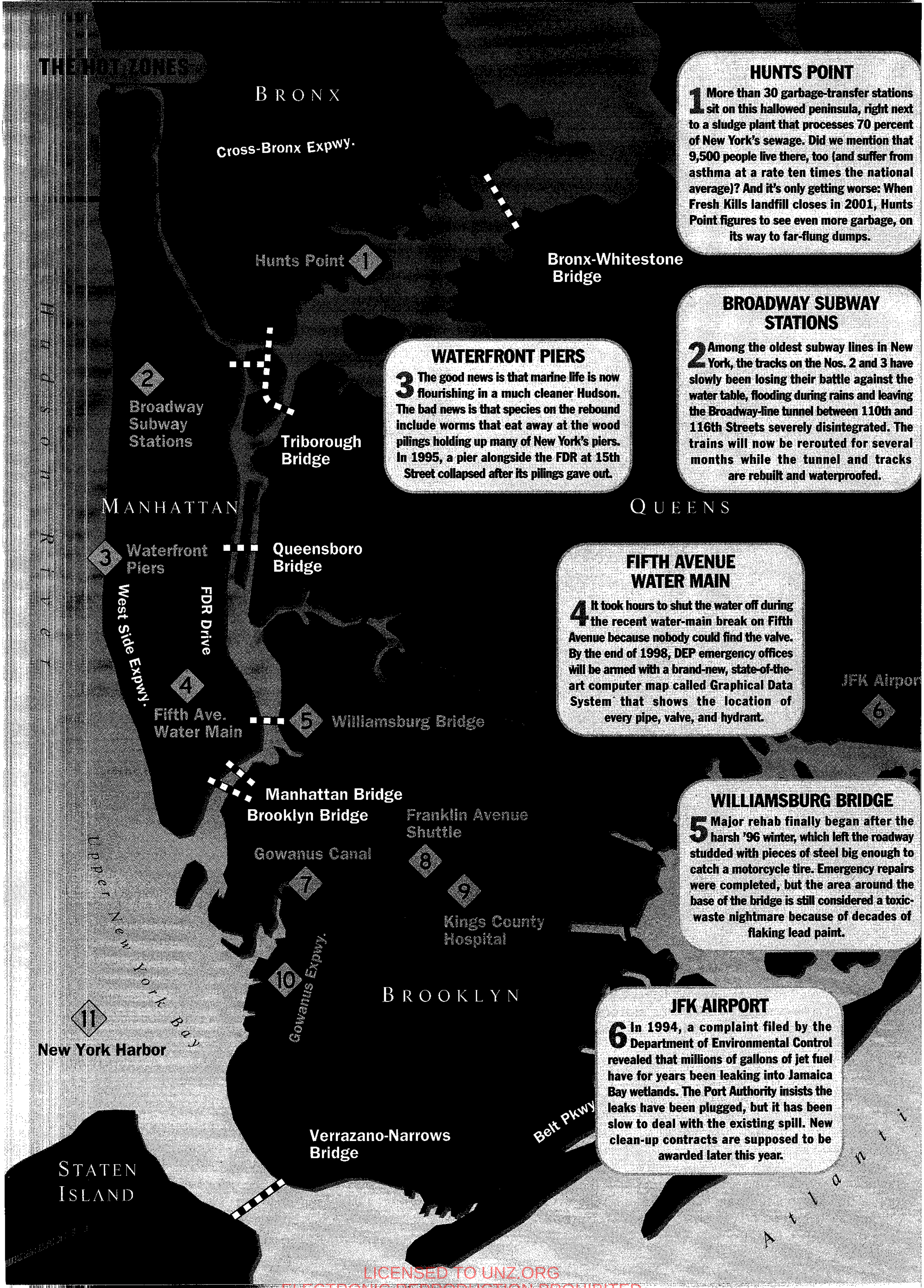
"Sludge movement" makes up a good deal of his company's business, Kisloff said. Linking with the New York and Atlantic Railway, the Cross Harbor uses one of its venerable, powder-blue locomotives to bring this specialized cargo to the "float bridge" it operates near the defunct piers at 50th Street in Brooklyn. From there, the railcars are rolled along tracks onto the deeply odorific barge to be hauled across New York Bay by tugboat. Arriving at the Greenville yards in New Jersey, the freight can then be shipped anywhere in the country. This particular 52 tons is ticketed for a vegetable farm in Texas, where they think treated human night soil is the cat's pajamas, fertilizer-wise. While it wasn't always in the dung-shuttling business, the Cross Harbor has been operating in much the same way since 1905.

In a city with 656 miles of subway track, 468 subway stations, 346 miles of tunnels and aqueducts, 6,000 miles of water pipe, 88,000 miles of electric cabling, 6,600 miles of gas lines, 6,000 miles of sidewalk, more than 2,000 bridges, and 103,700 fire hydrants, the Cross Harbor Railway, with its 13.1 miles of track and a pair of battered and rat-infested "float bridges," might not seem to be an impressive infrastructural item. But the funky railroad, which Greg Kisloff says has experienced some "very lean" years of late, finds itself strangely positioned to become, as its thin brochure boldly proclaims, the "float bridge to the 21st Century."

That's because, as almost everyone agrees, Brooklyn is an excellent place for the long-plotted "hub port," which would bring back business lost to container ports like Port Elizabeth and Port Newark during the fifties and sixties. There's no way Jersey can take the giant new superships, people say. The Kill Van Kull, which leads to the Jersey ports, has only a 45-foot draft before hitting bedrock; Brooklyn's sandy channel has 80 feet, easy. Operating much in the

Photograph by Bernd Auers.

THE HOT ZONES


Bronx
Cross-Bronx Expwy.
Hunts Point 1
Bronx-Whitestone Bridge
2 Broadway Subway Stations
Triborough Bridge
Hudson River
Manhattan
Queens
3 Waterfront Piers
Queensboro Bridge
West Side Expwy.
FDR Drive
4 Fifth Ave. Water Main
5 Williamsburg Bridge
JFK Airpor
6
Manhattan Bridge
Brooklyn Bridge
Franklin Avenue Shuttle
8
Gowanus Canal
7
9
Kings County Hospital
Upper New York Bay
10
Gowanus Expwy.
11
New York Harbor
Brooklyn
Verrazano-Narrows Bridge
Belt Pkwy
Staten Island
Atlanti

HUNTS POINT

1 More than 30 garbage-transfer stations sit on this hallowed peninsula, right next to a sludge plant that processes 70 percent of New York's sewage. Did we mention that 9,500 people live there, too (and suffer from asthma at a rate ten times the national average)? And it's only getting worse: When Fresh Kills landfill closes in 2001, Hunts Point figures to see even more garbage, on its way to far-flung dumps.

BROADWAY SUBWAY STATIONS

2 Among the oldest subway lines in New York, the tracks on the Nos. 2 and 3 have slowly been losing their battle against the water table, flooding during rains and leaving the Broadway-line tunnel between 110th and 116th Streets severely disintegrated. The trains will now be rerouted for several months while the tunnel and tracks are rebuilt and waterproofed.

WATERFRONT PIERS

3 The good news is that marine life is now flourishing in a much cleaner Hudson. The bad news is that species on the rebound include worms that eat away at the wood pilings holding up many of New York's piers. In 1995, a pier alongside the FDR at 15th Street collapsed after its pilings gave out.

FIFTH AVENUE WATER MAIN

4 It took hours to shut the water off during the recent water-main break on Fifth Avenue because nobody could find the valve. By the end of 1998, DEP emergency offices will be armed with a brand-new, state-of-the-art computer map called Graphical Data System that shows the location of every pipe, valve, and hydrant.

WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE

5 Major rehab finally began after the harsh '96 winter, which left the roadway studded with pieces of steel big enough to catch a motorcycle tire. Emergency repairs were completed, but the area around the base of the bridge is still considered a toxic-waste nightmare because of decades of flaking lead paint.

JFK AIRPORT

6 In 1994, a complaint filed by the Department of Environmental Control revealed that millions of gallons of jet fuel have for years been leaking into Jamaica Bay wetlands. The Port Authority insists the leaks have been plugged, but it has been slow to deal with the existing spill. New clean-up contracts are supposed to be awarded later this year.

GOWANUS CANAL

7 In June, after decades of disuse, the giant propeller that pumps clean water into the stagnant canal will begin operating again. Then the city can figure out what to do with the contaminated sediment on the canal floor, the rotting bulkheads, and the abandoned factories that line the banks.

FRANKLIN AVENUE SHUTTLE

8 The tiny, four-stop elevated subway line has been in a state of near-collapse for 25 years. The MTA, which has long wanted to shut down the line entirely, has started and stopped reconstruction efforts several times in the past. This year, one more rescue mission will be launched.

KINGS COUNTY HOSPITAL

9 How do you know you're standing in front of a past-its-prime municipal building? Look for flimsy modular huts. Lots of schools have them (for classrooms), and so does the sprawling Kings County Hospital (for its urgent-care facility). As for the rest of the hospital, it's undergoing a $260 million renovation (to downsize bed capacity and reconstruct outmoded patient wards), though many believe a billion wouldn't be enough. "They should make a museum of this, like Alcatraz," says one staff doctor.

GOWANUS EXPRESSWAY

10 Tear down the elevated monstrosity and rebuild it as a tunnel, or fix it in place, bit by bit—either way it'll cost billions. For now, a cheap solution: Nets have been slung under portions of the expressway to catch chunks of falling concrete.

NEW YORK HARBOR

11 Five million cubic yards of sediment have to be dredged every year just to keep the harbor open for deep-draught ships. The silt used to be dumped off the Jersey coast, but a federal order put a stop to that last year. Until a permanent home can be found for the sediment (which is rich in toxic contaminants), crucial waterways will clog up. Hello, Texas?

Map by Nina Wallace.

manner of an airline "hub," the port will serve as a dock for the big ships, which will off-load their wares there to be carried up and down the coast by a flotilla of smaller vessels. Once the hub port comes, people say, in Brooklyn, the fleet will always be in.

Key to the hub-port idea is the prospective rail-freight tunnel under New York Bay from Brooklyn to either Staten Island or New Jersey. The idea doesn't really make sense without it. This is because New York City, the largest consumer market in the United States, has the worst rail infrastructure of any city in the country.

Although the following facts have become a mantra along the waterfront, to the uninitiated, the stats boggle the mind. To wit: While most major industrial centers handle freight at roughly a 60–40 truck-to-rail ratio, in New York something like 98 percent of all goods moves by truck; 2 percent by rail. This amounts to an astounding 30,000 extra trucks on the roads per day, pumping exhaust into the air, clogging up traffic, ripping the hell out of the roadways. It wouldn't be this way if there were a freight-rail connection between New York and the rest of the country. But there isn't. Just to cross the Hudson River, a freight train has to go 220 miles north to Selkirk, New York.

"People don't know this, but when the Port Authority was created in 1921, it was for the express purpose of building a train tunnel under New York Harbor," says Congressmen Jerrold Nadler, a hub-port and rail-freight obsessionist. You listen to the story and you begin to understand that while we might like to believe that august Promethean visions shaped the city, it is the scummy skullduggeries of long-dead politicians that often have the greatest lasting influence. After the Port Authority failed to dig the tunnel, the cause was taken up by New York's then-mayor, Tammany minion John F. Hylan. Hylan's tunnel was routed not to Jersey, as in the original plan, but to Staten Island, thereby keeping the project's huge patronage under city (i.e., Hylan's) control. Governor Al Smith balked at this. When Hylan resisted, Smith recruited Gentleman Jimmy Walker to run against the mayor in the upcoming Democratic primary, and that was it for John F. Hylan and his tunnel. The Depression and then World War II soon followed, and the New York Harbor rail tunnel became another little bit of the New York that never was.

"Skip ahead to the 1960s, when Robert Moses was building the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge," Nadler continues. Though most people had forgotten the cross-harbor rail tunnel, Moses hadn't. Having begun his epic career as Al Smith's most brilliant lieutenant, Moses had Hylan's original plans in his Randall's Island office. As if to make sure the tunnel stayed dead, Moses, who abhorred trains of any type, located the shaftway Hylan had begun in 1924 and filled it in with the same dirt excavated during the construction of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Of course, if the rail tunnel had been built 70 years ago, the Brooklyn waterfront wouldn't have died and the place might already be the hub port. Now most significant political figures in the city support building the new tunnel (D'Amato and Moynihan have recently come onboard) even with the price hovering in the $2 billion range. Related bills also mount. The decaying Gowanus Expressway, originally expected to last at least 100 years, is barely hanging on after 50, largely because of those 30,000 extra trucks. Some say tear the loathsome roadway down, replace it with a tunnel, but that'll cost upwards of $2.4 billion. The alternative is to rebuild the thing in place, engendering a decade of mind-frazzling detours.

WHEN IT COMES TO INFRAstructure, bricks and mortar are the least of it. Like ideas, the built city moves in cycles, often capriciously. It pays to follow the larger arc of things. This is something Dave Hendrickson knows well. A proud member of the Sanitation Department, Hendrickson gives tours at the 2,500-acre Fresh Kills garbage landfill, a piece of New York City infrastructure so spectacular that, along with the Great Wall of China, it is one of the few man-made objects that can be seen by astronauts orbiting the Earth. A man who enjoys visiting the dump's Christmas-tree-mulching facility because the smell reminds him of his childhood, Hendrickson says working at Fresh Kills, where the city currently dumps 13,000 tons of trash a day, has taught him "a respect for what people keep, what they throw away."

To this end, Hendrickson tells the following story of New York City infrastructure: One chilly November afternoon, an elderly lady, described by Hendrickson as "elegant and meticulous-looking in a floral dress," came to the dump in tears. In charge of the raffle at her Queens church, she'd inadvertently tossed out all the tickets. "She said she'd never be able to face the church people again," Hendrickson recalls. "But Sanitation is not haphazard. We can track things. I spread the load with her garbage over a 100-foot-square area up on the active bank, got down on my hands and knees with thousands of

THE CRISIS MANAGERS

DOOMSDAY DEPT.

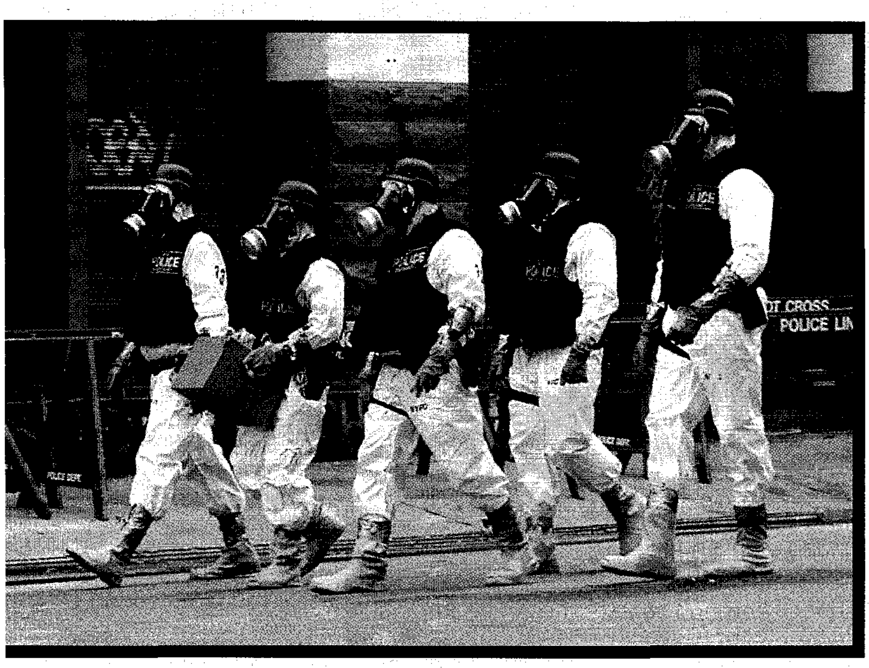
In the era of bio-terrorism, the mayor says we're ready for anything. Do you know where to pick up your gas mask?

By Ed Shanahan

LAST MONTH'S BIG ANTHRAX SCARE MAY HAVE QUICKLY TURNED INTO A NON-story, but it surely left plenty of New Yorkers wondering exactly what they should do in the event that some madman does launch a doomsday attack on the city. The answer is more complicated now than it was when the catastrophic threat was a nuclear attack. In those days, the infrastructure—13,000 fallout shelters—was in place, and the drill was simple: Listen for one of the city's 741 air-raid sirens, head for the closest shelter, and settle in with your two-week supply of canned food, bottled water, phenobarbital, and hunger-suppressing candy.

Today, those sirens are gone, as are the shelters and everything in them. In New York City, disaster-relief responsibility now lies with the two-year-old Mayor's Office of Emergency Management and its $137,000-a-year director, Jerome M. Hauer. Mayor Giuliani created the 38-person office—its responsibilities used to belong to the Police Department—under his direct control after the January 1996 blizzard that buried the city in two feet of snow. At the time, Giuliani said the move was required to "ensure that the city has a professionally trained staff available at all times" to respond to such crises as "weather disasters, power failures, water-main breaks, building collapses, fires, health hazards, and labor strikes."

The mayor's failure to mention chemical or biological attacks was not an accident. After all, for strategic reasons, even government administrations less prone to secrecy than Giuliani's don't like to reveal their plans for dealing with such occurrences.



Last November, a fleet of 1,000 emergency workers in protective gear staged a mock search-and-rescue mission to prepare for a deadly-gas attack on the city.

"We discussed having a hearing on this a couple of years ago, after the gas attack in the Tokyo subway," said Councilman Sheldon Leffler, chairman of the City Council's Public Safety Committee, referring to the 1995 incident that killed twelve people and injured 5,000. "I was told that the administration would not discuss its plans publicly for fear of giving information to a potential saboteur."

The best display of what New York is ready for was staged last November: a four-hour drill on Greenwich Street in TriBeCa that was the largest and most visible event of its kind in the city. Nearly 1,000 police officers, firefighters, and FBI agents—some of them clad in protective moon suits—responded to the mock release of soman gas. The media was alerted in advance, and reporters and photographers were there to take it all in: emergency workers barricading the street, inflating a portable decontaminating shower, carrying stricken "victims" to safety. Officials described the exercise as successful; the response time for the emergency crews was three minutes, and hazardous-materials teams removed the "injured" from the contaminated area within twenty minutes. Officials acknowledged, however, that had the attack been real, it probably would not have come on a Sunday, aboveground, and on a nearly deserted block.

The November drill was the latest of a dozen similar exercises held in the past few years. All of the city's ambulances are stocked with atropine, which, among other things, is an antidote to sarin gas. Such medicine is crucial because sarin can kill instantly, although most ambulances do not carry enough to treat more than a few people. Bellevue Hospital, where the emergency room plays host to a disaster drill about twice a year, is also stocked with atropine. (The effects of biological agents like anthrax are treated with antibiotics.)

Managing any such disaster will be Hauer, who is becoming one of the city's ubiquitous public officials, appearing on the scenes of building collapses, helicopter crashes, and water-main breaks, and even at the press conference to announce last year's $8 million anti-rat initiative. He has the power to give orders to all city commissioners, including those heading the Police and Fire departments, and his aggressive style has offended some, such as the residents of a crumbling Stanton Street building that the city quickly had evacuated and then demolished in January without allowing tenants to retrieve their pets and belongings.

Hauer has said he believes the city is "light-years ahead of any other city in the country for dealing with the threat of biological terrorism." But no one can, or will, say just what it takes to be fully prepared. One EMS source scoffs at the city's rhetoric and its rescue drills. "It's nothing but window-dressing," he says. "New York may be the best-prepared city in the country, but that just tells you how totally unprepared everybody else is."

When an argument broke out a couple of weeks ago between Congressman Chuck Schumer and the city administration over whether the city has enough gas masks for its emergency workers (no one ever mentioned what that number was or what it should be), it would have been reasonable for people to ask: *What about me? Do I get a gas mask?*

Well, if you think you need one, you're probably best off not waiting for the city to hand them out. Spy shops in Manhattan are selling a $289 model known as the Smoke Hood by Drager, designed with the modern-day bio-terrorist in mind. If that's a bit steep, Iceberg Army Navy in SoHo has Israeli Army surplus gas masks on sale for $35, half off the usual price. ▬

Photograph by Frances M. Roberts.

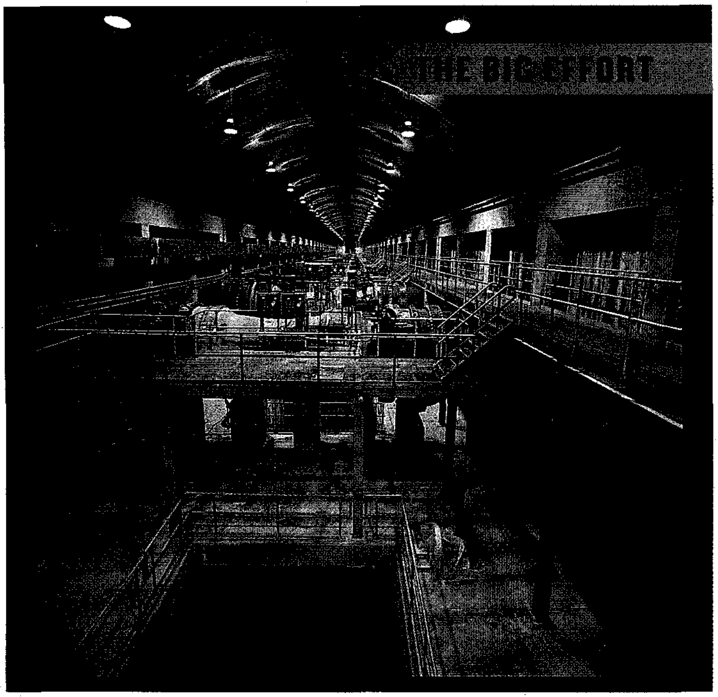
gulls flying around, and I found every single one of those raffle tickets. Then she started crying again. 'You don't know what you've found,' she said. 'Yes, I do,' I said. 'I found your raffle tickets.' 'No,' she said, 'you found my honesty and dignity. You gave me my life back, right here in this city dump.' "

Now Fresh Kills, which first opened in 1948 when the city decided to consolidate rubbish at a single dump site, is slated to close on December 31, 2001. Although the date seems uncomfortably imminent, too much political capital (primarily Mayor Giuliani's and Governor Pataki's) has been invested to back down now. What comes next boils down to one question: Where do you stash 13,000 tons of garbage a day? A: not anywhere near where I live, dude. With solid-waste removal a going concern in the hinterlands, New York's garbage will end up far away (Virginia and Texas are vying). But as for establishing a system for getting it there—upgrading garbage transfer stations in the city and creating new ones—that is likely to precipitate some of the ugliest, most drawn-out battles the city has ever seen.

For his part, Dave Hendrickson says he will take the Fresh Kills closing in stride. He's nearing retirement, anyway. Leachate-gas stench or no, fifteen years at Fresh Kills has been "a great experience," the sanitation man says. Not that he's in favor of keeping it open. Once he lived close to the dump, just on the other side of Richmond Avenue, but he moved his family to Rockland County. "Things get used up; if I learned anything from working here, it's that," Hendrickson says.

All of which made me think of Joseph Mitchell's 1951 essay "The Bottom of the Harbor," a good deal of which is set in the Fresh Kills area. Centering on his friend Mr. Zimmer, an employee of the Bureau of Marine Fisheries who roamed the then-thriving New York waterfront looking for shellfish poachers, Mitchell describes a Fresh Kills full of "pheasants, crows, marsh hawks, black snakes, muskrats, opossums, rats, and field mice," a place where rabbis used to come to collect twigs and cuttings suitable for harvest festivals. It was here, Mitchell says, that Zimmer came to relax. Except now, his friend was worried. "At times, out in the marshes, Mr. Zimmer becomes depressed," Mitchell wrote. "The marshes are doomed. The city has begun to dump garbage on them. . . . Eventually it will fill the whole area."

Which it did—not that Mr. Zimmer lived to see the full extent of it. Still, the harborman might be happy to learn that somewhere down the road, after decades of detoxification, Fresh Kills will eventually return to the wetlands it once was. The black snakes and marsh hawks, should any remain, will be back.



Twenty-five stories below Van Cortlandt Park lies the 200-yard-long valve chamber of the city's auspicious Third Water Tunnel, considered the most impressive public-works project in the Western Hemisphere.

IF ONCE UPON A TIME PEOPLE STRODE toward the future in this place, now, as the daily damage reports underscore, we're deep into middle age. The Band-Aid men are the true champions of the city now; maintenance is the only abiding verity. It isn't that the city isn't capable of the Big Effort. Anyone riding 25 stories down below Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx to visit the 200-yard-long valve chamber of the $5 billion Third Water Tunnel cannot help but be awed. Twenty-eight years in the making, the water tunnel, the city says, is the single biggest infrastructure project in the Western Hemisphere. But for all this prodigious digging (and the death of 24 sandhogs in the process), the tunnel is meant only to supplement the existing pipes, enabling them to be repaired for the first time since they were laid down in the beginning of the century. Today, even when we do the impossible, we're still only keeping up. It's the same with the effort to replace the late, lamented Pennsylvania Station. The celebrated plan, championed by Senator Moynihan, involves no grand new structure—just retrofitting an existing post-office building.

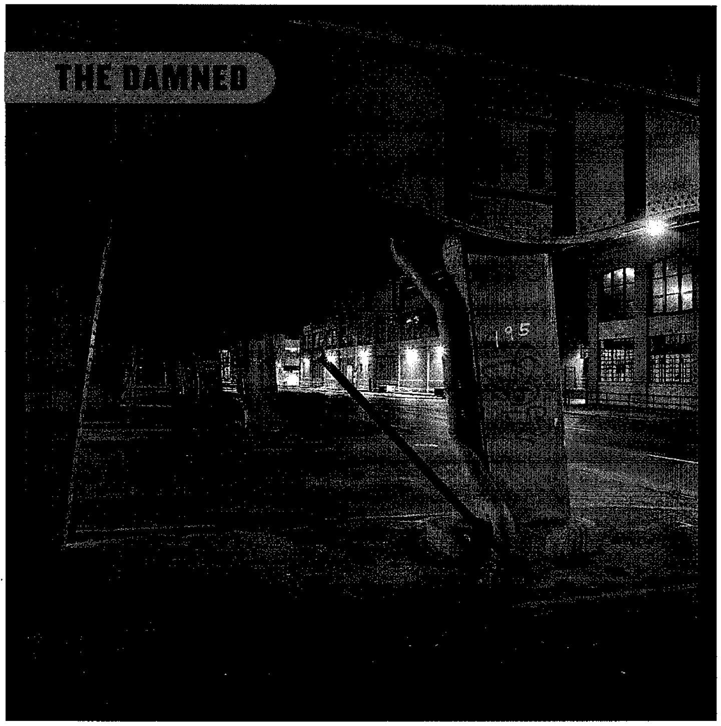
Nowadays, building the future appears a far less heroic endeavor, arrived at by increments. I got to see a bit of it one cold and misty February night, just over the city line in Yonkers. A few months earlier, a car had crashed into a gasoline truck, setting off an explosion that destroyed a New York State Thruway overpass. Tonight, the overpass would be fixed. A 120-foot-tall crane was lifting an 80-foot-long, 73-ton prefab section of new roadway. It was then fitted into place like a gargantuan Lego. Hours later, with five more giant "pieces" snapped together, the bridge was finished, in time for the morning rush.

"Replacement parts, built somewhere else—this is part of where we're going," says my guide for the evening, Sam Schwartz, a.k.a. "Gridlock Sam," all-around infrastructure maven and former New York City traffic commissioner (it was he who ordered the Williamsburg Bridge closed in 1988). "It's not romantic, but it works."

Watching that huge concrete slab dangle in midair, I couldn't help but think of a recent visit I'd made to the headquarters of Robert Moses's old Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Commission. Here, alongside a giant photograph of Moses and Walt Disney surveying a plan for the 1964 World's Fair, are several models for projects both completed and not. Among

"We like to believe that august visions shaped the city, but often, it's been the scummy skullduggeries of long-dead politicians that have had the greatest lasting influence."

Photograph by John Kernick.



The Gowanus Expressway, built by Robert Moses, was promised to last a century, but it's buckling and crumbling after only 50 years. Is the answer a prefab face-lift or a tunnel with a $2.4 billion price tag?

these is a four-foot-square miniature of Moses's most despised, neighborhood-wrecking scheme, the never-built Lower Manhattan Expressway. Pull on the Lucite handles and a swath of Broome and Kenmare Streets disappears, to be replaced by a plastic facsimile of the prospective expressway. Watching this model in action now is a creepy experience. After all, it was Moses's pernicious social legacy that made heroes of people who stopped huge infrastructural projects, not of those who built them. Still, in these patch-and-paste days, there lurks a demented nostalgia for the era when such wholesale manipulation of the landscape, no matter who or what stood in the way, was deemed the great work of men. The memories of it, conjured up by Moses's toy model, make a 73-ton prefab hunk of concrete seem puny. Which is another infrastructural irony, considering many observers believe that the prefab system used on the thruway bridge might be the best way to renovate Moses's teetering Gowanus Expressway. One wonders what the old power broker, who was routinely saluted by tollbooth operators as he passed by in his chauffeured limousine, would think of something as un-Promethean as that.

SO THIS IS WHAT IT'S COME TO: a future by Lego. Snap in, snap out. I suppose it could be worse. Still, there is plenty of non-interchangeable, one-of-a-kind, no-size-fits-anything infrastructure here. It's why this place is unlike any other, which is something I like to point out to my children when we drive around and visit the city's living fossils. You can't depend on kids to get excited by the sort of prose Harry Granick wrote back in the forties. They might think it's corny. It's better to let them see for themselves.

Recently, we've been stopping at the 9th Street–Gowanus Canal Bridge. Until it was closed in 1994 after flunking safety tests, we crossed the 84-foot-long span on a daily basis. Now we watch the city try to replace it, which has not been easy. In fact, according to one engineer close to the project, "the 9th Street Bridge is one of the most fouled-up jobs to hit Brooklyn in 25 years."

It was a problem of overload of trans-temporal, intermodal infrastructure at the bridge site, I try to explain to my children. The car bridge was built in 1903 to span the reeking Gowanus (a key industrial-shipping passage for decades after it was first dredged in the 1840s). Above is the elevated F-train stop at Smith and 9th Streets, erected in 1933. Ninety feet high, to accommodate the now sparse Gowanus boat traffic, the hideous, concrete-covered F station is the highest in the entire New York subway system. This became a concern when it was noted that the train trestle had begun to vibrate during the sinking of the caissons for the new 9th Street Bridge below. The Transit Authority demanded that the Department of Transportation stop work while the F-train stanchions were outfitted with motion sensors. It was found that the trestle had, indeed, "settled" somewhat, which required the periodic uplifting of the structure with beer-keg-shaped hydraulic jacks.

All this, I told my children, was the reason we hadn't driven across the 9th Street Bridge in close to four years and were not likely to for several months to come. There were other stories of infra-snafus as well, mostly having to do with problems incurred as a result of the intense pollution in the Gowanus, but the kids were not in the mood. Aside from being gleefully disgusted that the D.O.T. used divers for welding projects under the toxic muck of the Gowanus, they'd rather go to Coney Island, they said.

No problem. The journey to Coney is a deeply trans-temporal experience, infrastructurally speaking. Among other treats, you get to drive under the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. When the bridge that would alter Staten Island for all time was first constructed, Moses boasted that if the cables of the span were stretched end to end they would circle the earth five times and reach halfway to the moon. But it was John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever* who had the most memorable line about Robert Moses's bridge and New York City infrastructure in general. Sitting beneath the bridge's mighty roadway, describing how a worker slipped and fell into the massive concrete anchorage (and was still in there), Travolta reflected a moment, then snickered. "Dumb fuck," he said.

Anyway, arriving in Coney, we contemplated the superstructure of the Stillwell Avenue elevated subway stop. First opened in 1920 as the southernmost reach of the then privately owned BMT system, the fortress-like Stillwell station serves as the last stop for the D, F, N, and B lines, a distinction noted in the name of the now-shuttered lodging establishment across the street, the Terminal Hotel. We sat there a while in the semi-forbidding darkness, watching the trains rumble in and out of the beat-up yet seemingly impregnable station. "Isn't it amazing that people just like us built that?" my daughter finally said, as if the Stillwell Station were a Mayan pyramid come to Brooklyn. ▬

"In these patch-and-paste days, there lurks a demented nostalgia for the era when the wholesale manipulation of the urban landscape was deemed the great work of men."

Photograph by Jan Staller.

FAULTY TOWERS

Old buildings may send the occasional cornice hurtling to the street, but it's modern architecture we should really fear.

By Karrie Jacobs

When bricks peeled off the side of 540 Madison Avenue and tumbled to the pavement last December, the office tower was portrayed in the press as an architectural Bad Seed, a building destined to wreak havoc from the moment it was born. Though the southern façade of 540 Madison gave way only after workers hired by the new owner, Harry Macklowe, punched windows into a previously unbroken expanse of brick, blame was heaped on the negligence of the contractors who erected the tower in the late sixties. They had left out two thirds of what should've been 14,500 brick ties, strips of corrugated metal that anchor the thin brick exterior wall to the layer of cinder block that sits snugly on the building's frame.

Certainly, 540 Madison represents a worst-case scenario, but its troubles are not unique. The building's deficiencies are rooted in the fact that modern architecture allows only a thin margin of error. Our faith in structural engineering and computer simulations has led to a "lack of redundancy." That's the phrase used by architectural engineers Matthys P. Levy and the late Mario Salvadori in their book *Why Buildings Fall Down* to explain disasters such as the 1979 collapse of the Kemper Arena in Kansas City, triggered by rain, wind, and miscalculation.

Generally, when we think of buildings being dangerous, we think of old ones, all covered with parapets, balustrades, and gargoyles. But many of these structures are in fact much stronger than newer ones. Structural engineer Donald Friedman, author of *Historical Building Construction*, tells a story about working on a 1917 office building in lower Manhattan that was supported by steel columns clad in brick. "We opened up a column, and there was no column there," Friedman recalls. "There was a hollow space in the brick pier in the shape of the column, and a little red staining on the brick where there was rust. But the column was gone. It had rusted to the point where it was gone. For four stories, from the roof down, there was no column worth talking about." But because the old building had twelve-inch-thick walls, it didn't fall down. That's *redundancy. Modern buildings don't work that way.*

Sixties apartment buildings like this one often hide dangerous structural flaws behind their bland façades.

Five forty Madison uses brick the same way it uses glass, as a veneer that bears no load. Picture it: a wall 39 stories tall but only one brick thick. What keeps the skinny wall standing is its connection to the frame of the building. But that connection is remarkably tenuous: a strip of corrugated steel one tenth of an inch thick and perhaps eight inches long—the construction-industry equivalent of those plastic ties that come with jumbo trash bags—planted in the wall every four square feet of brick. If the contractor skimps on brick ties, all bets are off. Most modern architecture depends, if not on brick ties, then on bolts, or steel angles, little pieces of hardware.

About a month before the bricks began tumbling on Madison Avenue, the Whitney Museum finished reinstalling the 1,500 six-hundred-pound granite slabs that make up its façade. The Whitney, a sleek powerhouse of a building, was a mess behind the granite. Architect Marcel Breuer made one bold statement, but the building's original contractors apparently built it with whatever metal fasteners they could find: "When we took off the skin here," says the project's restoration architect, Diane Kaese of Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, "we found galvanized [steel], we found brass, we found stainless steel, we found regular carbon steel. We found painted steel. We found unpainted steel. You name it, we found it. It was crazy. It was wacko."

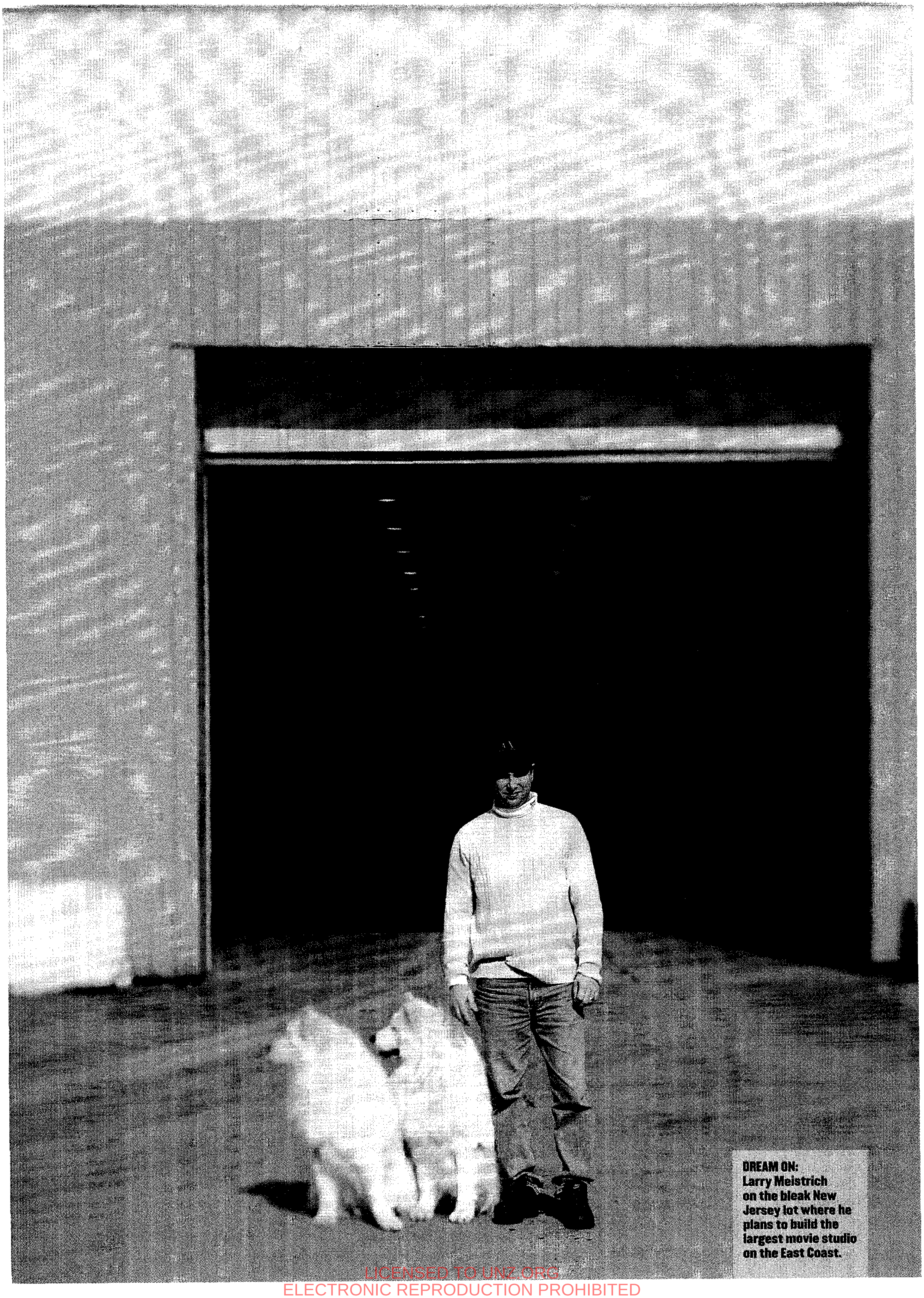
The problem that afflicted both the Whitney and 540 Madison—inadequate or improper anchoring of the façade—is commonplace. Every structural engineer or restoration architect, it seems, has an anecdote. Some of the scarier stories involve marble, an opulent material that suggests permanence but is actually quite brittle when it's sliced an inch or two thin, as it is on many contemporary buildings. In Chicago, the owners of the 82-story Amoco Building waged a decade-long battle to keep the slabs of Carrara marble, weakened by humidity and pollution, from slipping right off the side of the building. Finally, they gave up and resheathed the tower in granite. Meanwhile, at the General Motors Building on Fifth Avenue, the owners have instituted an "Ongoing Marble Panel Repair Program" to secure or replace marble slabs, which, according to building-inspection reports, fall apart on a regular basis.

"Marble is not a good material, especially in an atmosphere like New York, where you have high acidity in the air," notes Matthys Levy. "It doesn't do that well in Rome, either."

Landmark towers may not be immune to failure, but boring, ubiquitous buildings, the ones we take for granted, often cause the most trouble. Before 540 Madison came along, one of the most troubled buildings in New York was the Vermeer, a 1964 co-op at Seventh Avenue and 14th Street. Six years ago, its original layer of white glazed brick had to be completely removed and replaced. Though nothing tumbled to the street, the façade was bulging conspicuously. The reason is that the concrete that forms the building's frame tends to shrink, while brick walls remain constant. Restoration architect Walter Melvin discovered that the steel angles that were supposed to support the brick wall and lock it to the frame had either shifted, because of the shrinkage, or were missing altogether. This meant that the brick wall was only loosely attached to the building and was beginning to crumble under its own

(continued on page 78)

Photograph by John Kernick.



DREAM ON: Larry Meistrich on the bleak New Jersey lot where he plans to build the largest movie studio on the East Coast.

BIG SHOT

At 23, Larry Meistrich launched SoHo's hottest film company with a mix of no-frills financing and extravagant chutzpa. But will that be enough to construct a lavish Hollywood-style studio in, uh, New Jersey?

“I'M SURE 99 PERCENT OF PEOPLE WHO'VE HEARD ABOUT OUR PLAN don't believe it,” admits Larry Meistrich, shivering in the sharp winter wind. “It's always, ‘Yeah, sure, go ahead, build a movie studio.’ ” Meistrich is the 31-year-old president of the Shooting Gallery, an independent film company based in SoHo best known for producing the Oscar-winning *Sling Blade.* He is standing in the middle of a cracked asphalt clearing that currently serves as the parking lot of the Joe Supor Industrial Park in Harrison, New Jersey: a bleak 30-acre lot that seems designed to confirm the worst of the state's bad aesthetic rap. It's also where, this July, Meistrich plans to begin construction of the largest movie studio on the East Coast, and the biggest movie soundstage in the world. ■ If he weren't so generally unassuming—soft-spoken, shortish, stocky, dressed as usual in jeans, a sweatshirt, and basketball sneakers—there would be something nearly Promethean about Meistrich. The hulking relief of the Manhattan skyline looms over his shoulders as he quietly outlines his plan to bring Hollywood to the dilapidated banks of the Passaic River. But even he would have to agree that when it comes to engendering thoughts of movie magic, rusting machinery just doesn't pack the punch of swaying palm trees. Indeed, on this particularly gray weekday morning, a Hollywood-size helping of suspended disbelief is required to imagine the site as he sees it—the New York area's first Los Angeles–scale, and –style, studio back lot. ■ “Most definitely, what we want to build here is an L.A. studio,” he says, excitedly. “Right now, there are 560,000 square feet of studio space in New York, and that includes apartments where the only thing you can shoot is a bottle of aspirin. We're looking to put up 500,000 square feet of indoor space, fifteen to eighteen soundstages—one 110,000 square feet, *the biggest in the world*—as well as a functional outdoor back lot: sets of

BY ZEV BOROW

Photograph by Michael Kenneth Lopez.

Paris, the subway . . ." He looks behind him. "Yeah, we're going to have sets of New York in the shadow of New York. As well as all the support services, just like in L.A. I don't only want to be competitive in the city or on the East Coast. I want L.A.'s business. I want blockbusters, the *Die Hard 4*s and the *Godzilla*s, studio tours, the whole thing."

Of course, *Godzillas*—never mind studio tours—cost money. In this case, at least $75 million to $100 million. It is, to say the least, an ambitious undertaking for a company with fewer than 50 employees, one that has made twelve feature films in its eight-year history and only began distributing its own films two months ago. But in recent years, the Shooting Gallery has emerged as one of the fastest-growing film companies in New York, and Meistrich has become a homegrown proto-mogul, though one more in the mold of Jack Warner than of Michael Eisner.

"Larry really is like those old Jewish peddler guys that went out to Hollywood and created the studios," says Nancy Kriegel, the Shooting Gallery's plain-talking production head. "Those guys weren't filmmakers, they were businessmen. That's Larry."

Meistrich doesn't disagree: "I'm not your typical indie film guy," he admits, heading to his car for the eight-mile, fifteen-minute trip back to Manhattan. The Shooting Gallery, though, is most certainly an indie film company. Aside from making *Sling Blade,* it has produced Nick Gomez's *Laws of Gravity* and *Illtown,* Hal Hartley's upcoming *Henry Fool,* and the soon-to-be released *Niagara, Niagara,* among others.

Still, Meistrich notes: "I don't know Godard or any of those movies." A rabid sports fan who played football (cornerback) in high school (Horace Mann) and college (Johns Hopkins), he adds: "If I'm at home and I've seen *SportsCenter,* I'll watch a movie. What I really like is the process of making movies. I've studied the old studios. The indentured-servitude part wasn't really that appealing, but having everything under one roof, the turnkey aspect to them, their basic business plan, that all really makes sense to me. And the time is right for it to work here. . . . I know we're a small company, and that people are skeptical. My response: 'Okay, fine, don't believe us.' "

"I tell directors, 'Respect my money, and I'll stay out of your face,' " Meistrich sa

"I WOULD LOVE TO SEE A BUNCH OF FUCK-UPS LIKE LARRY AND BOB and those guys running a studio," hoots Billy Bob Thornton in his inimitable Arkansas drawl. Bob is 35-year-old Bob Gosse, the co-founder and creative director of the Shooting Gallery and director of the upcoming *Niagara, Niagara.* Thornton, the writer, director, and star of *Sling Blade,* first met Gosse and Meistrich when he approached them about financing his film.

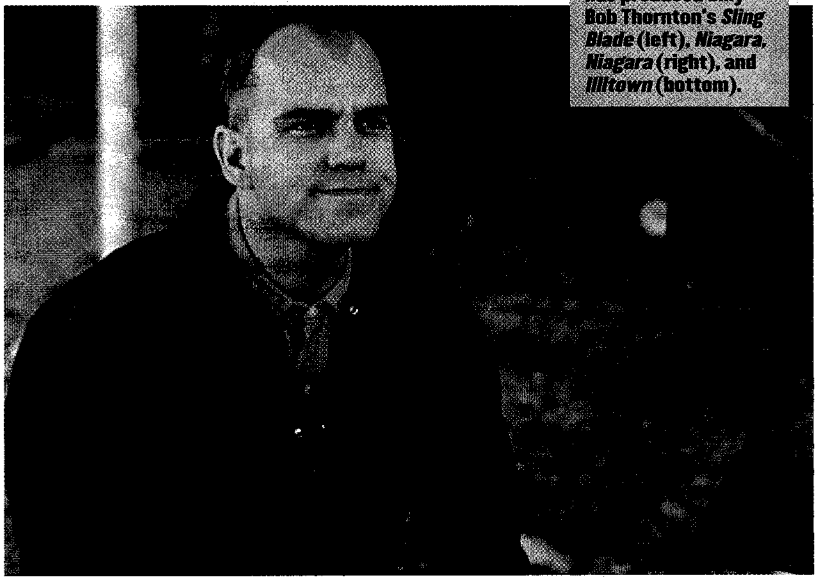
"They were in khaki shorts, looking like they just rolled out of bed," he recalls. "It was like dealing with regular guys. We didn't even sign a contract. I shook hands with Larry, and he promised me he'd make the movie."

Thornton was even more impressed with the company's policy on creative control. All directors are promised final cut, *if,* that is, they stay under budget. "They realize that the way to make a good movie is to let someone do what you hired them to do," says Thornton. "They're not going to give you any extra grapefruits for the fruit tray, but they're not going to tell you how to make your movie."

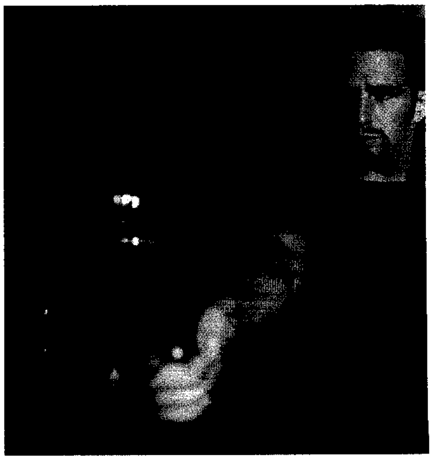
Meistrich unequivocally confirms: "You respect my money, and I'll stay out of your face. If you're over budget, then you lose final cut. But we've never had a director that's gone over."

The differences don't stop there. Unlike the overwhelming majority of theatrically released films, which are largely underwritten by studios, one third of every Shooting Gallery production is self-financed, and the rest is bankrolled by private investors. "We've *never* taken studio money," crows Steve Carlis, the company's CFO. "All our films are financed with talent essentially working for scale and back-end profit points. And all but one of our movies have been profitable."

Over the past eight years, the company has assembled a dependable core of nearly 900 private investors. "Almost all the money is Wall Street money," says Carlis. "In the beginning, it was the usual—friends and relatives. But after *Sling Blade,* Wall Street people started beating down our door. Now the minimum is $10,000, which is really not that much for a $2- or $3 million movie, but some of our biggest investors were once $10,000 guys."



CRITICAL MASS: In the past two years, the Shooting Gallery has produced Billy Bob Thornton's *Sling Blade* (left), *Niagara, Niagara* (right), and *Illtown* (bottom).



Carlis, like many of the company's upper-level staff, is an old friend of Meistrich's (they met at Horace Mann). Gosse, a Lindenhurst, Long Island, native who graduated from the SUNY Purchase film program, met Meistrich in the late eighties on a Hartley-directed short film produced by Ted Hope, the future founder of fellow New York indie production company Good Machine (*The Ice Storm, The Myth of Fingerprints*). In 1990, the two started the Shooting Gallery.

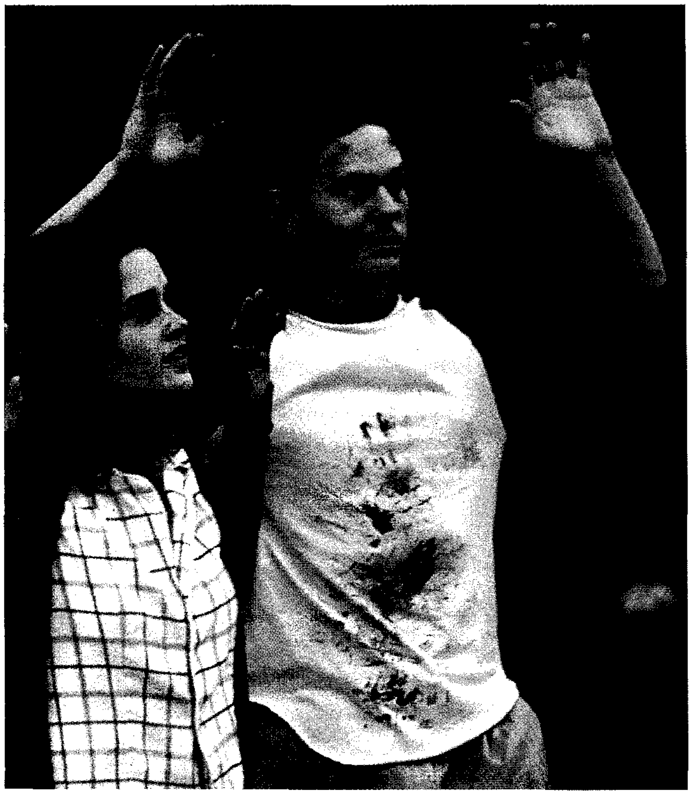
The company's first efforts were shorts, B-grade features, and freelance production assistance for larger films. "We'd basically take a film's budget and try to shave a few hundred dollars

Photographs: top, Michael Yarish/Everett Collection; bottom, Everett Collection.

off the top," says Meistrich. This was generally accomplished by, as he puts it, "scamming deals" on everything from camera rentals to catering.

"We realized there was a huge opportunity there," explains Meistrich. "Nobody likes that end of the business. It's not glamorous; it's really hard work; it sucks. It's like playing offensive line in football." He flashes that grin again. "But you know, if you have a great line, then your team wins."

Such Parcells-inspired business philosophy led to the launch of a Shooting Gallery production-services division, followed by a SoHo post-production facility and, finally, subsidiaries dealing with music for films, grip and electric services, and studio resources. The latter led to Harrison, New Jersey.



"This isn't just something that we came up with last week," says Greg Kanter, a company vice-president who headed up the search for a studio site. He lists the locations that were considered: a warehouse on Mercer Street; the roof of the St. John's Center in TriBeCa; sites in Chelsea, Battery Park City, Harlem, Long Island, and Westchester.

Last year, the company came close to buying the old Yale Trucking building on 40th Street and the West Side Highway. "The city was behind us," says Kanter. "But at the last minute, the Javits Center, which is next door and has eminent domain over the Yale building, decided they might exercise their right to expand. Anyway, after that, we found Harrison."

Currently, the two biggest New York studios are Kaufman Astoria and Silvercup. Both are located in Queens and are constrained by their relatively small size. "Those places aren't big enough and don't have the full range of services *we're* talking about," says Kanter. "And the existing warehouse at the Harrison site is in pretty good shape as is. Several Hollywood studios have already approached us about it."

But the financing deal required to turn the site into a viable studio has not been finalized, and no architect has yet been hired. Meistrich has secured the services of Stone Pine Capital, the firm that brokered the financing of the Chelsea Piers, but he is still negotiating with the New Jersey State Economic Development Commission to get a credit enhancement that would allow the Shooting Gallery to borrow at a reduced interest rate.

"We're confident that New Jersey will do anything to help bring this project to the state," says Meistrich. "We've already gotten verbal commitments from institutions who will finance us. And equity deals are what we come from. From the top down, we're always willing to take the risk."

OVERHEARD AT THIS YEAR'S SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL: "THIS IS A company that hasn't made a movie with a budget of over $2 million. How the fuck do they think they're going to build a $100 million studio?"

It's true that even in the relatively small pond that is the New York film industry, the Shooting Gallery isn't close to being a big fish. The total gross of all the Shooting Gallery's films, ever, is just over $100 million, while Miramax (the big fish) grossed $419 million last year alone. The disparity was obvious at Sundance. While Miramax threw a swank wall-to-wall cocktail party at Park City, Utah's only oyster bar, the Shooting Gallery held a staff dinner at a nearly empty Chinese restaurant, where most of the action was generated by Meistrich's 2-year-old daughter, who was playing loudly under a table.

Of course, Meistrich and his colleagues offer little but respectful admiration for the Brothers Weinstein, and continually note that it's pointless to make comparisons.

"The big difference between us and Miramax, or even someone like October Films [*Secrets & Lies, The Apostle*], is they're an acquisitions company getting into production, and we're a production company getting into acquisitions, post-production, and studios," says Meistrich. ("Miramax is both an acquisitions *and* a production company," sniffs a Miramax spokesman in response.) Still, Meistrich clearly relishes getting the Weinsteins to buy *Sling Blade* for more than $8 million (a film he made for $1.2 million).

"I actually *respect* Harvey [Weinstein] in a weird kind of way," he says. "He's absolutely up-front and honest about the fact that he's going to try and fuck you. He's like: 'I will put your movie out there, market it well, and win awards. But don't get in my face.' "

Nevertheless, Miramax has already snagged the distribution rights to Thornton's next two films, which the Shooting Gallery will produce. And in public, at least, Miramax honchos are supportive of Meistrich's studio vision.

"The need for more studio space in New York is absolutely there," says Mark Gill, president of Miramax's Los Angeles operations. "Larry and Bob are better than anyone else at making movies for a price. You bet against them at your own risk."

Ted Hope of Good Machine agrees: "It's a build-it-and-they-will-come thing. There's huge shortage of space. All you need is *Spin City, Cosby,* and a big movie in town, and there's nothing left. The question is, who's the right person to build it? I wouldn't do it. But Larry has always had a profound amount of courage and has demonstrated his ability to succeed at things using unorthodox means. I mean, over the last few years indie film hasn't been particularly kind to private money, unless you've invested in Larry's indie films."

(continued on page 94)

they're over budget, they lose final cut. But we've never had a director go over."

Photograph from Everett Collection..

MEET THE NEW BOSS AT CBS (CAREFUL, HE BITES)

Three years ago, no one but Howard Stern and Don Imus had heard of Mel Karmazin. Today, the demanding, tight-fisted radio mogul is running the Tiffany Network, and Wall Street couldn't be happier.

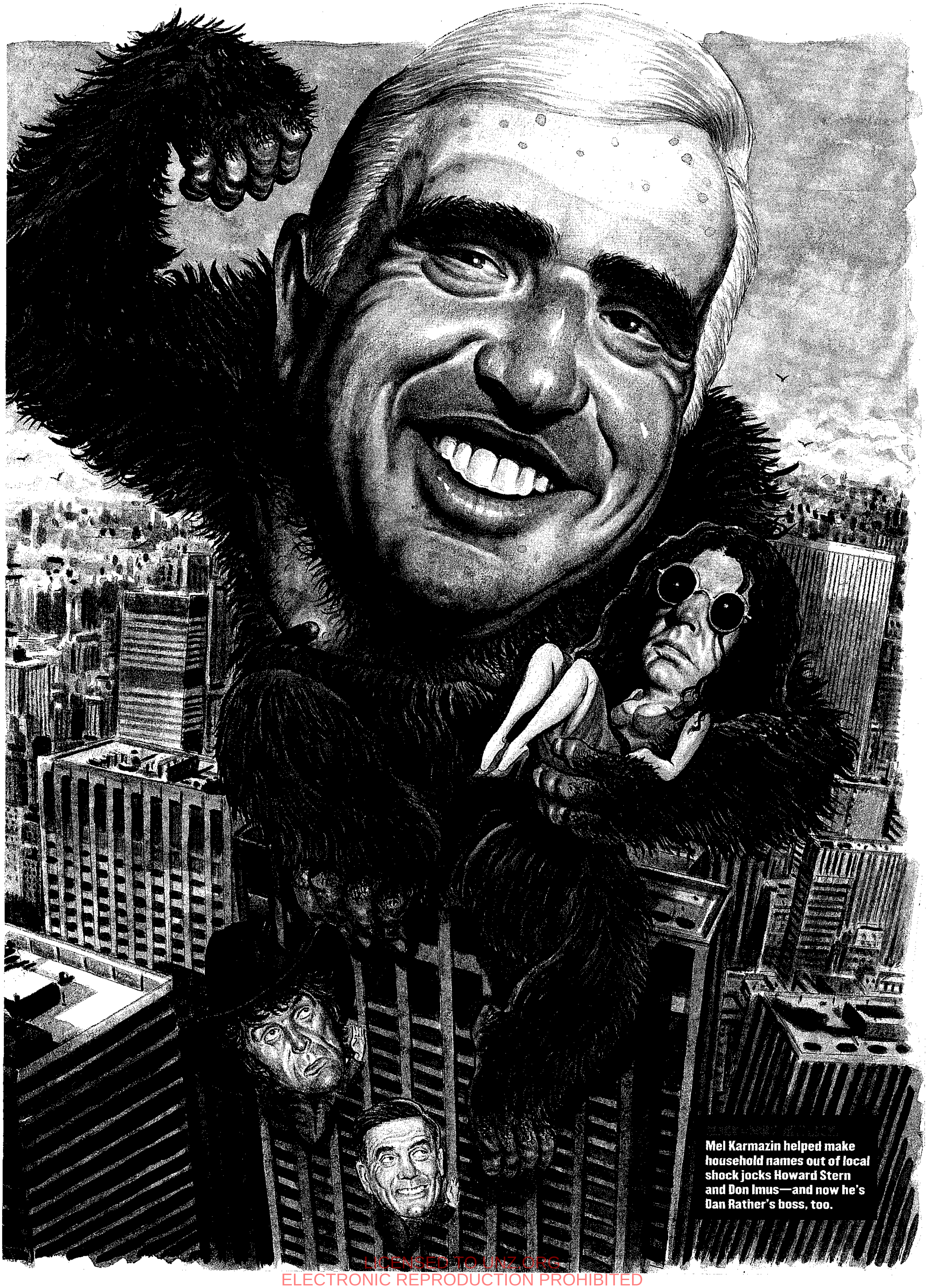
By Alan Deutschman

ON THE BACK OF THE ENVELOPE, THE NUMBERS simply didn't add up. CBS seemed destined to lose at least $100 million a year, maybe as much as $200 million. And now the deal-makers were going to face the cameras and try to convince a skeptical press that this apparent disaster was really a triumph, that by paying an astonishing $500 million a year for the rights to televise the American Football Conference—$283 million more than NBC had paid the year before—CBS had somehow made a shrewd move.

Seated at the dais, with an official NFL football in front of him, CBS chairman Michael Jordan looked surprisingly withdrawn, and his slow midwestern drawl and at times uncertain delivery did little to inspire confidence. Bearing the same name as the basketball star used to have its advantages: Securities analysts said things like "Michael Jordan is the Michael Jordan of business." But ever since his rusting, old-line manufacturing company, Westinghouse, had bought the tarnished Tiffany Network in 1995, Jordan's fans on Wall Street had forsaken him. He had traded one struggling industry for another: broadcast television. CBS's stock sagged, and one financial pundit maliciously redubbed him "Hot Air" Jordan.

"We think this is a good economic deal," Jordan told the skeptical reporters at Black Rock, CBS's Sixth Avenue headquarters. Later he added that the NFL deal "wasn't what I would call a fall-on-your-sword kind of issue," which only made the crowd think it probably was.

Illustration by Drew Friedman.



Mel Karmazin helped make household names out of local shock jocks Howard Stern and Don Imus—and now he's Dan Rather's boss, too.

HAIL MARY PASS: In January, CBS execs Jordan, McManus, and Karmazin announced their new NFL deal.

THE MOOD WASN'T improved by the second panelist, Sean McManus, the earnest and youthful head of CBS Sports, who insisted unconvincingly, "We are not going to lose money on this deal." Before hand-delivering the CBS bid to the NFL offices, McManus had stopped to pray at St. Patrick's, though it turned out that divine intervention was hardly necessary: CBS's offer was $170 million more than NBC was reportedly willing to pay. As Jordan and McManus spoke, a third man sat by their side, shifting impatiently. He didn't look like the typical executive, what with his intense, mischievous eyes peering out from beneath remarkably oversize and intimidating black brows. Unlike Jordan, he hadn't studied at Princeton and Yale—he'd worked his way through night school. And at 54, he still suffered the indignity of hearing people badly mispronounce his immigrant family's name. He had been in the TV business for only eight months, yet this was the one man whom financial writers and CBS's nervous investors were most eager to hear, the one whose opinions they actually trusted.

Mel said it was a good deal. And they believed in Mel.

Mel Karmazin runs the 77 radio stations and the fourteen TV stations owned and operated by the company (the "O-and-Os," in broadcaster's lingo), but his unofficial job description is CBS's would-be savior. He had the easy self-assurance and natural chutzpa to joke freely about the football deal and get away with it. "Through Sean and the sports department, we have access to tickets," he said, openly acknowledging the much-whispered joke that the real reason CBS committed billions for the NFL rights was just so its execs could get free seats at games. The crowd smiled as if on cue. Then he pointed out the dozens of giveaway baseball hats emblazoned NFL ON CBS. "We had the hats ordered six months ago," he deadpanned. "You can't get hats quickly. So we had all the confidence in the world that we'd be back with the NFL."

By the end of the week, CBS's stock price was up more than $2, or 8 percent, to nearly $30 a share, meaning that the company's overall market valuation had risen by $1.75 billion—despite a deal that looked like a huge money loser. But Mel said it was good, and Wall Street absolutely loves Mel.

"The stock went up, and that's incredible," said Jessica Reif Cohen of Merrill Lynch, one of the most powerful analysts on the media and entertainment beats. "It shows how good Mel is and how much people believe in him."

DON IMUS IS AT HIS studio at WFAN in Astoria, just after finishing his show. He fires off a list of the men he considers the top echelon of corporate moguls. He names Lou Gerstner, who turned IBM around. Jack Welch, the mastermind of General Electric. Sumner Redstone of Viacom. Michael Eisner at Disney. And Mel Karmazin. "He's of that ilk," says Imus. "He's one of the few people in that sort of position who's genuinely interested in the shareholders as opposed to his own interests." The I-Man is biased, of course. Karmazin's the guy who pays him well over $2 million a year, the guy who took his local show to more than 100 stations nationwide. Still, Imus's view reflects the conventional wisdom on Wall Street, which is thoroughly caught up in what Cohen calls "Mel Fever."

Only two years ago, Melvin Karmazin (pronounced KARma-zinn) was virtually unknown in the television industry, let alone considered the peer of the global media overlords who don their khakis to scheme about the great digital convergence at Herb Allen's annual summer mogulfest in Sun Valley. Karmazin was a radio guy, and even though his company, Infinity Broadcasting, owned 44 stations, even though he was the impresario behind profit-raking shock jocks like Imus and Howard Stern, radio was seen as passé. It was antiquated and local at a time when the media megalomaniacs were infatuated with the futuristic and the global.

Karmazin's real media glory didn't begin until he sold Infinity to CBS for $4.9 billion in stock in June 1996 and assumed leadership of CBS Radio. He immediately began agglomerating responsibilities and discarding rivals, and today there is no doubt that Karmazin is the de facto power at CBS, even though Jordan holds the titles of chairman and chief executive and Karmazin is supposed to be on the same sub-level as Leslie Moonves, the network's Hollywood-programming chief. Wall Streeters think it's only a matter of time before Karmazin is the de jure ruler as well. "Mel will not tolerate sharing the power. Michael Jordan will be eaten alive by him," says Porter Bibb, an

"Mel has been incredible for the stock and for the company. He can run circles around anyone."

Photograph by Kathy Willens/AP/Wide World.

"He loves to pick a fight. He picks fights all the time. Karmazin has no patience for anyone."

investment banker at Ladenburg, Thalmann who specializes in media deals.

While Karmazin is known as an intimidating, imperious manager, widely feared by CBS employees, he seems to have the full support of the network's top talent. "Mel is one of the few executives today who has broadcasting in his blood," says Don Hewitt, executive producer of *60 Minutes* and a 50-year CBS veteran. "Paley did, Sarnoff did, Goldenson did. Ted Turner does. There's another one, and his name is Mel Karmazin." Dan Rather adds: "I admire Mel tremendously." Rather has rhapsodized about Karmazin on the radio with Imus, who seems to compete with Howard Stern in lavishing on-air praise for the executive. Stern recently boasted that his "friend" Mel would "wreck" NBC and joked that Karmazin had paid off Jerry Seinfeld to kill his own show on the rival network.

Karmazin has a similarly hypnotic influence over CBS investors, partly because he's one of them. His personal stash of 11 million CBS shares—about 1.6 percent of the company's equity—makes him one of the biggest individual stockholders. Wall Street's money masters take comfort in the fact that Karmazin's own fortune is tied up in his $350 million worth of CBS stock, and they're confident that he'll do whatever it takes to keep the share price rising. What's more, they know his extraordinary record for producing windfall profits. This is a guy who took his company public in 1992 for $17.50 a share and sold it only three years later for $170 a share, a runup that clinched his legendary status on the Street.

Investors are well aware that Karmazin is a maniac about making money for them. He's an obsessed, divorced workaholic with a hyperaggressive, bullying, in-your-face style, a fearsome, tightfisted micromanager who even scrutinizes his underlings' long-distance phone bills and overnight-mail receipts. (Until recently, Karmazin claimed that he personally signed off on any outlays of more than $500 for his thousands of employees, from travel expenses to salary raises to trivial office purchases; now the figure is up to a still-measly $2,000.) Stockholders love that Karmazin lives across the street from his austere office and once bragged that he had no life outside of work. They might not want to work for him, but this is exactly the breed of manager to whom they'd want to entrust their life savings.

In certain ways, Karmazin fits neatly into the stereotype of the entertainment mogul. Like Time Warner's Gerald Levin, he's a media boss who has the ironic habit of turning down nearly all interviews with the media (including this magazine), and he remains intensely private in the midst of an extremely high-profile industry. Like Levin's vice-chairman, Ted Turner, he is a wired, charismatic No. 2 executive with a slight tendency to bombast and a penchant for driving underlings crazy. Finally, like the late Steve Ross, the legendary former head of Time Warner, Karmazin is the charismatic Jewish striver from the outer boroughs, the self-made man who rose to the highest heights.

HE DID INDEED GROW UP on the wrong side of the tracks. He had a nice view of the 59th Street bridge, but it was from a low-rise public housing project on the Queens side rather than a high-rise private condo on the Manhattan side. His family could hardly have been more stereotypically blue-collar: His father drove a taxicab; his mother worked in a curtain-rod factory.

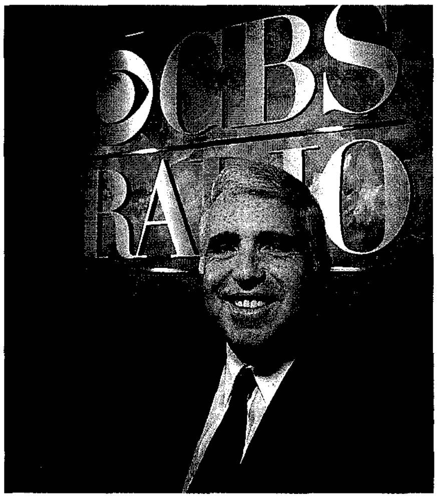
Karmazin launched his career in the mail room of the small Zlowe advertising firm while he was still in high school. After stints as a mail clerk and a typist, he worked as a media buyer while earning a B.A. in business at night from Pace College.

At 23, he went to work at Black Rock—the building he would later come to terrorize—in a decidedly plebeian role: cold-calling small-business owners, such as grocers, as an ad salesman for the WCBS-AM radio station. He sold so many ads that before long he was making $70,000 a year, an amazing sum for someone that young in the late sixties. The station manager tried cutting his commission rates, complaining that the kid was making too much money, so Karmazin quit in 1970 and moved to Metromedia's WNEW-AM. He was such a persuasive salesman that he managed to push clients to pay higher rates to advertise during broadcasts of New York Giants games, even though at that time the team was pitiful. From there, Karmazin rose swiftly. At 31, he entered the executive ranks as general manager of WNEW-FM, which flourished with a rock format. Later he took over WNEW-AM as well.

In 1981, at the age of 38, Karmazin was recruited by two former Metromedia executives who offered him a $125,000 salary to run six radio stations for their new company, Infinity Broadcasting. At the new venture, Karmazin perfected his modus operandi, which he still follows at CBS. He would pay eyebrow-raising prices to buy stations in major markets, what he liked to call "oceanfront properties." Then he would slash administrative staffs and costs, running the tightest of tight ships, while doubling or tripling the number of commissioned salespeople in an effort to raise revenues.

For programming, Karmazin hit on two successful formulas: football and shock jocks. Early on he saw the value of sports, buying the radio rights to almost all the New York teams—the Mets, Knicks, Rangers, Giants, Jets—as well as strong franchises such as the Dallas Cowboys. In 1985, soon after NBC fired Howard Stern for ridiculing the network's executives, Karmazin hired him for WXRK, better known as K-Rock, and proceeded to take Stern national, putting the King of All Media on 30 stations. That may seem like a no-brainer now, but the strategy was unprecedented at the time, when radio honchos believed naïvely that talent wouldn't travel. After Infinity bought WFAN in 1992, Karmazin gave Don Imus a rich five-year contract and took his show from one station to 100.

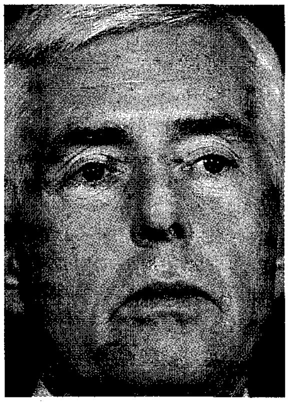
"Everything Mel does revolves around the business," says his friend Norm Pattiz, the founder of Westwood One, a national syndicator of radio shows (Larry King, Casey Kasem) that Karmazin bought years ago. Even when Karmazin goes to sporting events—the Super Bowl, the Nagano Olympics—his overriding purpose is work, says Pattiz. Friends of Karmazin's ex-wife, Sharon, complain that he spent

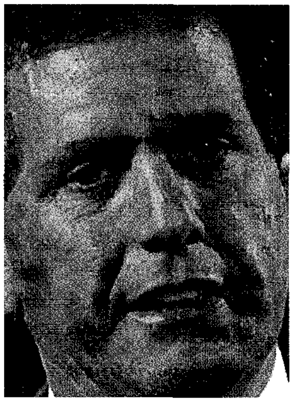


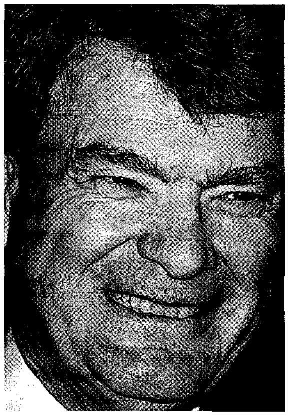
HE CAME HOME TO CBS: Karmazin's radio career began when he was 23, selling ads at WCBS-AM.

Photograph by Andrew Brusso/Outline.

"Mel will not tolerate sharing power. CBS chairman Michael Jordan will be eaten alive by him."







TARGETS

Peter Lund, above left, was a twenty-year CBS veteran who ran the company's owned and operated stations and television network. He "retired" last year after Karmazin came aboard. Future showdowns are predicted between Mel and *programming* chief Les Moonves, above right, and CBS chairman Michael Jordan, left.

too many evenings and weekends at his 57th Street office rather than at home in the comfortable but unglamorous suburb of North Brunswick, New Jersey.

Sharon still runs a local public library with an iron will reminiscent of her former husband's style. Like Mel, she comes from a modest background and is reputedly very smart, unostentatious, and extremely averse to publicity. Mel remains close to his two grown children, both of whom may be preparing to carry on the Karmazin legacy. His son, Craig, bought three radio stations in Wisconsin with Mel's help, and his daughter, Dina, recently worked for E! Entertainment Television.

KARMAZIN APPROACHED Michael Jordan in 1996 with a proposal to buy CBS's radio stations. Jordan countered with a lucrative offer for CBS to take over Infinity for $4.9 billion, not much less than Jordan had paid for all of CBS the year earlier—networks, TV stations, and radio. As part of the deal, Karmazin would run all the radio stations in the merged companies. When the acquisition was announced in June 1996, Don Imus told his radio audience about his friend Mel: "It will occur to someone over there at CBS that maybe he should run everything."

After the deal closed, on New Year's Eve, Karmazin went stalking through Black Rock, hunting for wasteful spending, much as Ted Turner did at Time Warner's headquarters when he signed on as its biggest shareholder. Last May, with CBS's stock still mired in a slump, Karmazin—famously impatient for results and intolerant of rivals—took action. In what looked like a boardroom coup executed with remarkable speed and surprise, CBS announced the retirement of Peter Lund, the well-liked twenty-year veteran who was head of CBS's fourteen owned-and-operated TV stations and the television network. Mel then added the O-and-Os to his own fiefdom and assumed the title of president and CEO of the CBS Station Group.

The coup came the very day that CBS was announcing its fall lineup, upstaging programming boss Les Moonves's event at Carnegie Hall. This couldn't have endeared Mel to Moonves, the onetime actor turned network honcho, and it may have started the two men on a collision course.

"Les and Mel are two 8,000-pound gorillas—big personalities, bullies," says a highly placed CBS source. "At the moment, the law of the jungle persists and they get along, but at a certain point Les's performance will come under scrutiny." Moonves, who had a strong track record in his previous job at Warner Bros., has yet to come up with a hit show on his watch, despite having shelled out large sums for aging stars like Bill Cosby, Ted Danson, and Tom Selleck. "Mel needs to dominate people," the source explains. "He loves to pick a fight. He picks fights all the time. Karmazin has no patience for anyone. How much patience will he have for Les?"

Thrilled with the news that their man was consolidating his power base, Wall Street traders bid up CBS's market capitalization by more than $1 billion the day Karmazin took over from Lund. In his column at TheStreet.com, financial pundit James J. Cramer wrote, "Memo to Michael Jordan: Can you imagine how much Westinghouse will go up when Mel forces you out?"

From that point on, Wall Street's fervor for the stock continued unabated, driven more by its unshakable confidence in Karmazin than by any specific changes or short-term results. By the end of the year, it had risen from $17 to $30, a market-cap increase of $9.1 billion. "Mel has been incredible for the stock and for the company," says Merrill Lynch's Cohen. "He can run circles around anyone. Wherever Mel is, whether it's Infinity or CBS, the stock tends to trade at a huge premium, and he makes it worth it."

MOST PEOPLE ASSUME THAT RUNNING RADIO stations isn't the same as running a national television network, but don't tell that to Mel. Radio and television are "really not any different," he told a broadcasting trade publication—you just "add a zero."

If only it were that simple. The huge sums that the TV networks are paying for professional football are just the latest and most dramatic illustration of their increasingly desperate efforts to retain their once-broad audience. The Big Three's share of prime-time viewership, which held at 91 percent as late as 1979, is down to 42 percent, pummeled by cable and Fox. More and more, the viewers who cling to broadcast TV are the ones who have no other options—people who are older, poorer, less educated, more rural. Those are exactly the eyeballs that advertisers want the least, and they are CBS's home turf.

Paradoxically, even as ratings have gone down, advertising rates have been going up. "If you're Procter & Gamble, you have to sell a certain number of boxes of Tide, and you have to buy as much TV as you need to do it," says Nick Donatiello of Odyssey, a research firm that specializes in home entertainment and technology. "So these advertisers are like drug addicts: As ads are less effective, they have to get more and more to get the same fix. In a world where consumers can watch what they want, when they want to, there will be an incredible premium on live outcome-driven events. That means primarily sports, because how many awards shows can you have?"

Still, it's uncertain whether advertisers are willing to pay the rate hikes that CBS's salespeople will try to extract. A well-placed source at Black Rock says that Karmazin is counting on a 20 per-

Photographs: from top left, Larry Downing/Sygma; Kevork Djansezian/AP/Wide World; Gregory Pace/Sygma.

cent increase in ad revenue at the network level, meaning around $50 million. That may prove a dauntingly ambitious goal even for Karmazin, who has a long history of pushing painfully high targets on his sales forces and is described by one of his TV-station managers as a "sales animal." But even with a 20 percent boost, it's hard to see how they'll come out ahead. If the affiliates contribute $50 million a year to the network, as has been proposed, and the NFL deal increases the number of ad spots from 56 to 59 per game (which could kick in another $35 million a year), how does that justify a $273 million price increase?

The network brass like to mention the other benefits that are harder to quantify. There's the undeniable value of Sunday-afternoon football as a lead-in to *60 Minutes,* which has fallen from a 30 share to a 22 share since CBS lost football four years ago. The networks also have an almost religious conviction that football telecasts are a great opportunity for promoting their prime-time lineups, though in 1990, CBS had the Super Bowl, the World Series, the NBA playoffs, and the NCAA Final Four—CBS brass called it "the dream season"—and the network's new prime-time shows failed nonetheless.

THE QUESTION REMAINS: Can he make it work? Karmazin's strategy of cutting costs won't compensate for a scarcity of hits; besides buying the NFL rights, his few attempts at programming have focused on lowbrow shows and have been received by the industry with bemused skepticism. He paid a conspicuously high price to the King World syndicate for a new version of *The Hollywood Squares* (which debuts this fall), and he is reportedly trying to create a new late-night TV show for Howard Stern designed to compete with NBC's *Saturday Night Live.*

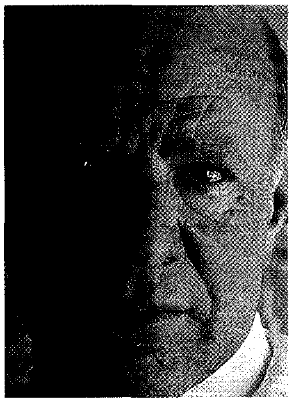
A well-placed source says that Les Moonves, who declined to be interviewed for this article, has trouble hiding his contempt for Karmazin's programming skills. But even if Karmazin isn't a genius at programming, investors suspect he has a hidden agenda. While CBS's football deal is risky for the parent company, it's clearly a boon to the TV stations that CBS owns, especially the seven that are in cities with AFC teams, such as New York's WCBS, whose profitability has been lagging behind its local NBC and ABC rivals by $100 million a year, according to Karmazin's own estimate. Since the TV stations are his personal fiefdom within CBS, the football deal has heightened suspicions on Wall Street and in Hollywood about Karmazin's ultimate plans. The thinking is that he may be planning to separate and sell off the so-called "network"—the organization in New York and Hollywood that produces national news and sports and commissions the prime-time entertainment—while keeping the TV and radio stations that actually broadcast all this programming. The network is a pitiful money-loser, while the stations contribute 79 percent of the company's cash flow.

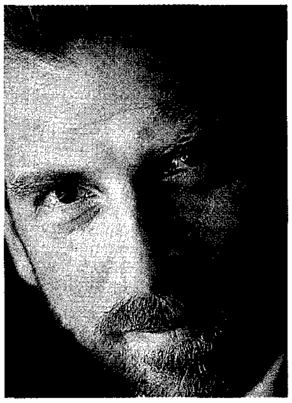
Quite simply, owning a TV network has become a lousy business—at least from a purely financial perspective. It makes sense only if the network serves some grander plan for its owner. ABC provides a ready, captive outlet for the movies and series produced by Disney. The Fox Network does the same for Fox's studio, and NBC fits into the grander scheme for GE, which is taking advantage of the brand to expand into cable ventures such as CNBC and MSNBC. CBS, on the other hand, has no studio to provide a strong pipeline to Hollywood talent and no major cable niche.

"It's inevitable that CBS shouldn't exist as a stand-alone TV network," says investment banker Porter Bibb. "Karmazin would keep the O-and-Os and radio and become the biggest radio broadcaster. It's basically his decision because he's the most influential stockholder. Other stockholders, particularly institutional stockholders, will listen to him. If they can cash out at top dollar, what have they lost?"

But who would want to buy CBS, especially if Karmazin strips out the local TV and radio stations? Microsoft and Viacom were once rumored to be interested. Ted Turner, who has lusted after the network since his earlier failed takeover bid, could come courting again. But Bibb thinks that Barry Diller is the prime candidate. The Hollywood legend made a run at CBS in 1994 and, after losing, spent several precious years in the unglamorous wastelands of home-shopping channels and UHF stations. Recently, he teamed up with Seagram's Edgar Bronfman Jr. to buy Universal's TV operations and the USA cable network. "I think Diller and Seagram will put an offer on the table for CBS because they need a distribution channel for Universal TV," says Bibb, who is writing a book on the Bronfman family. "Diller will be Bronfman's stalking horse. CBS will legitimize Diller as a major broadcast player. It's where he wants to be.

"You have to face the reality that networks are on a ticket to nowhere," he continues. "The brand is a wasting asset." He thinks it's foolish to believe that CBS can actually earn money on football. The deal only makes sense because it makes CBS's assets appear stronger to potential buyers. "It's like having your old clunker waxed and polished before you sell it," says Bibb. Karmazin has no emotional commitment to holding CBS together; he's interested only in making money for the investors. And if the only way to do that is by dismantling the venerable old broadcast giant and selling off the pieces? Stay tuned. ■





SUITORS

If Karmazin is really planning to dismember CBS and sell off just the network, likely buyers could be Universal's Barry Diller, above left, and Edgar Bronfman Jr., above right. But Time Warner's Ted Turner made one play for it and could try again; and even Microsoft's Bill Gates and Viacom's Sumner Redstone, right, were once rumored to be interested.

Who would want to buy CBS, especially if Karmazin strips out the TV and radio stations?

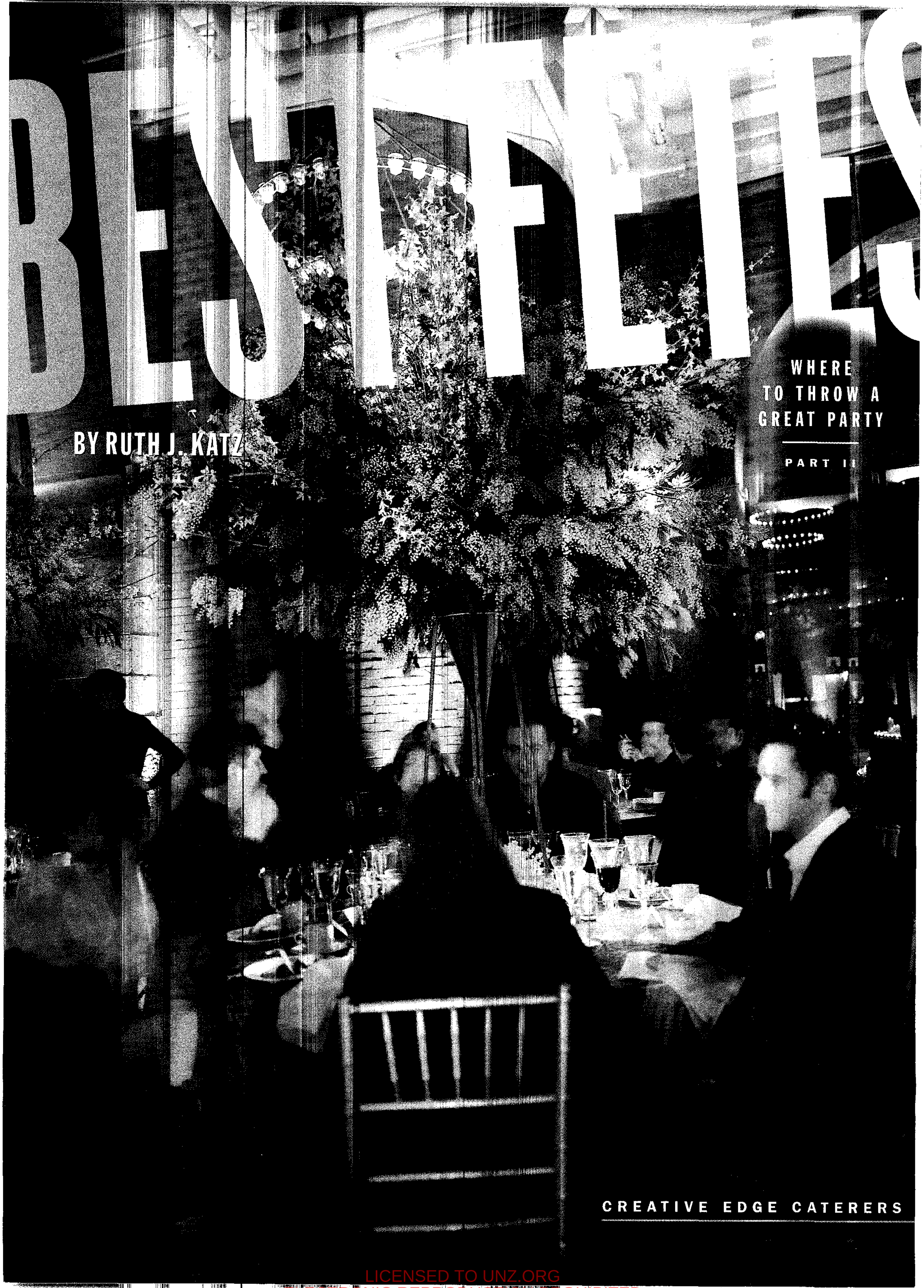
Photographs: clockwise from top left, Brian Smith/Outline; Dan Borris/Outline; Gregory Pace/Sygma.

BEST FETES

BY RUTH J. KATZ

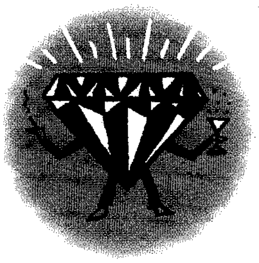
WHERE TO THROW A GREAT PARTY

PART II



CREATIVE EDGE CATERERS

IN PART TWO of our survey of the best places to throw a party, we cover all things wedding-related, from engagement celebration to fiftieth-anniversary blowout. Remember that room fees are often negotiable, and that, unless otherwise indicated, availability is every day.



ENGAGEMENT PARTY

Whether you're button-down or downtown, there are myriad possibilities. Herewith, a homey spot, an outrageous loft, a traditional restaurant, a lively compound, and a more formal room.

Park Avenue Cafe

WHY: Forget Nebraska. The bread basket of America is here on East 63rd Street: crumbly corn-bread sticks, dense sunflower-raisin rolls, a Parker House roll for two, and then nuts, mignon carrots, and the sublime potatoes herbe Maxime, basically potato chips that have gone to finishing school. Besides which, there's David Burke's cutting-edge American fare, Richard Leach's dessert extravaganzas, and the genteel, civilized atmosphere, all the more tranquil in the new party room, with its subdued tinted walls complemented by cherry wainscoting and hunter-green carpet.

ADDRESS: 110 East 63rd Street. **CONTACT:** Ellen Kaye (360-0438). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50 seated, 110 for cocktails. **COST:** From $75 per person for lunch; from $110 for dinner; alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Burke's pastrami salmon and smoked salmon on warm corn blini are already legendary. Aromatic cavatelli with wild mushrooms and white-truffle oil is achingly sensuous, as is black-and-white-bean soup served with a spiced shrimp quesadilla. Baby rack of lamb comes with scrumptious pumpkin-sage cannelloni.

The Penthouse

WHY: This 3,000-square-foot loft is warm and sunny, with a welcoming and tastefully appointed parlor, narrow dining area, and open kitchen. Andy King, the owner, says that when "guests" (Michael Eisner, Mary Tyler Moore, Bernadette Peters) use (sounds nicer than "rent") his home, he doesn't even bother to remove the personal bric-a-brac, among which are serious sterling trophies from canine competitions, all tributes to his grandmother, who raised champion terriers. In warm weather, a rooftop terrace (with a big barbecue) is also available.

ADDRESS: 177 Prince Street. **CONTACT:** Andy King (677-1443). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50 seated, 100 for cocktails. **COST:** $2,500 for eight hours. You supply the caterer (a no-brainer; you're three floors above chef Katy Sparks's hot boîte, Quilty's).

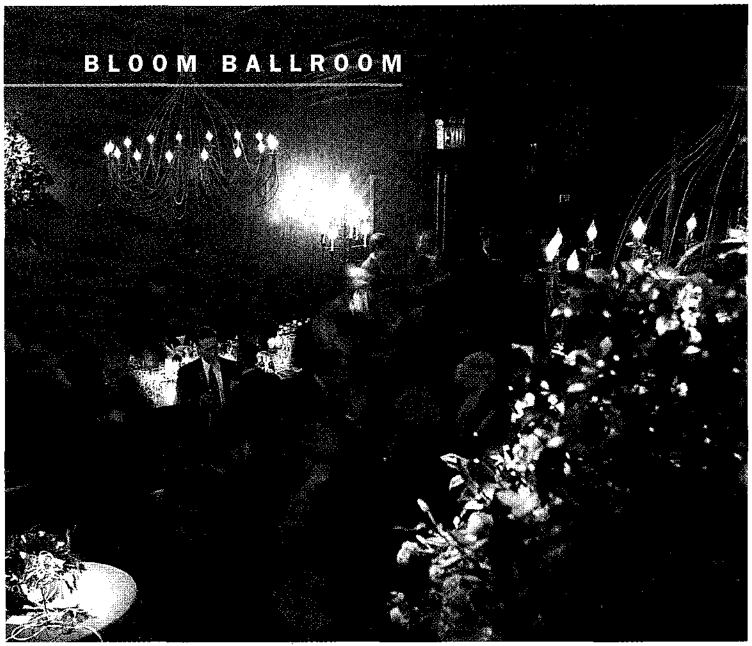
Creative Edge Caterers

WHY: Because it's just that good. With the kitchen under the whisk of executive chef Robert Spiegel, Creative Edge provides not only large-scale catering off-premises but also more-intimate gatherings in its two-year-old, on-site dining space in the Renaissance Revival–style Archive Building. The sedate and simple dining room changes attitude from season to season; what remains constant are the two twenty-foot-tall portals, providing light and drama. This space is particularly versatile.

ADDRESS: 639 Washington Street. **CONTACT:** Carla Ruben (741-3000). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50 seated, 75 for cocktails. **COST:** Room fee is $2,000. Cocktails: $50 to $75 per person for two hours, with eight passed hors d'oeuvre. Dinner: $150 to $225 per person. Tax is extra. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Chef de cuisine Kevin Garcia's presentation is arresting. A light shellfish broth, infused with a hint of tarragon and ginger, supports a thinly sliced lobster tail; skate wing is served with a timbale of artichoke, cipollini onions, and sautéed spinach; and venison with chanterelles, fried salsify, roasted chestnuts, and sun-dried cherry sauce provides a nice kick to the palate.

Tuscan Square

WHY: Located on two floors in an open, see-it-all-at-once space, Pino Luongo's slice of the Italian countryside has a bit of something for everyone, especially in the huge downstairs marketplace. There are terra-cotta floors, bright pasta stations, a salad area, an espresso bar, a confection counter, a spot for a deft mozzarella-maker, and a wood-burning oven that produces herb-scented focaccia. Don't opt for a seated dinner here; go for the ambulatory chaos.



ADDRESS: 16 West 51st Street. **CONTACT:** Carin Sarafian (462-1001). **ACCOMMODATES:** Downstairs Marketplace: 40 seated, 150 for cocktails; 30 minimum. **COST:** $55 to $120, depending on the menu and what service stations you want open; alcohol is per consumption, or open bar at $16 per person for the first hour, then $14 for each additional hour. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra. **A LITTLE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Antipasti range from velvety mortadella to chewy slices of lightly oil-coated potatoes. Zesty chicken livers are pretty delicious, but it's the salad of wild mushrooms with cubes of winter squash, pearl onions, and toasted chestnuts—all on a bed of frisée—that steal my heart. For dessert, Chocolate Night and Day is testament to the legerdemain of the pastry chef—delectable ice creams, semi-freddos, and some secret mixture of hazelnut and chocolate crested by an ethereal, spun-sugar calotte.

The Pierre Cotillion Room

WHY: A fantasia of rose marble, crystal, and gold leaf (the tango scene in *Scent of a Woman* was filmed here, and it has been the setting for countless debutante balls and benefits).

ADDRESS: 795 Fifth Avenue. **CONTACT:** Herbert Rose (940-8111). **ACCOMMODATES:** 500 for cocktails; 300 seated, with dancing. **COST:** Menus start at $100 per person; $140 per person with cocktails. Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and gratuity are extra.

The Carlyle Versailles Suite

WHY: For a smaller party, the Versailles Suite at the Carlyle offers flexibility as well as a stylish baroque backdrop.

ADDRESS: 35 East 76th Street. **CONTACT:** Victor Taylor (570-7108). **ACCOMMODATES:** 120 seated for dinner, 150 for cocktails. **COST:** High tea, $50 per person; lunch, from $75 per person; dinner, from $150 per person. Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and gratuity are extra.

Photographs: above, Steven Freeman; opposite page, Kenneth Chen; flowers by Avi Adler Flowers, Brooklyn.

BRIDAL SHOWER

Whether you seek levity or luxe, these places fit the bill.

MacKenzie-Child's

WHY: MacKenzie-Child's wildly eclectic, over-the-top tchotchke shop has two party spaces in the upstairs Butler's Pantry: the Reflective and the Aurora rooms. The former is aptly named—there are mirrors everywhere: Venetian, vanity, and rearview; light also glitters off of stove tops, auto grills, and safe-deposit boxes. The curtains are thin veils of tulle onto which all manner of stuff has been stuck—wristwatch, tea bag, Pez dispenser, even a travel-size tube of toothpaste—among myriad buttons, thread, bottle caps, and earrings. The smaller Aurora room takes overflow from larger events. Don't forgo the guided tour of the mini-mansion included in the party package.

ADDRESS: 824 Madison Avenue. **CONTACT:** Francis Fowler (535-5564). **ACCOMMODATES:** The Aurora Room: 14 (seated). The Reflective Room: 24 (seated). **COST:** $38 per person plus room fee of $300 per hour for the Reflective Room; $450 per hour for the Reflective and the Aurora rooms. Tax is extra; no gratuity. **AVAILABILITY:** Monday through Saturday. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** The party packages are theatrical extravaganzas presented with the company's signature whimsy, nay, madness. The beverage served with the "Boxed Lunch Social," for example, is pink lemonade in a plastic squirt bottle bedecked with an organdy ribbon; the rose-petal tea sandwich has a plastic ant on it. The most popular party option is the "Tea for Three," which includes savory sandwiches, nuts and berries for nibbling, anise biscuits, homemade peanut butter, brownies, a chocolate-and-nut-covered frozen banana, gold-leafed fudge leaves, and marzipan goodies that look like candies wrapped in fluted papers. And tea, of course.

Lady Mendl's Tea Salon

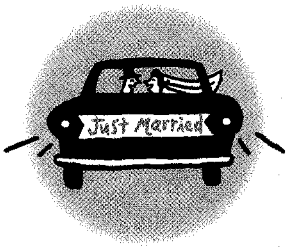
WHY: You may just swoon when you enter Lady Mendl's in the Inn at Irving Place, two lavishly appointed Victorian brownstones dating from 1834. The furnishings and china are eclectic, but somehow, everything works.

ADDRESS: 56 Irving Place. **CONTACT:** Charles Fitzer (533-4600). **ACCOMMODATES:** Lord Mendl (garden view): 20 (seated). Lady Mendl (city view): 25 (seated). Both rooms (cocktails): 70. **COST:** $35 per person for tea. To rent the entire space for tea (or any type of party), the room fee is $1,575 for both rooms, but there are several ways to reduce or eliminate it. Cocktails: $13 to $22 per person per hour, depending on choice of alcohol, plus room fee. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** The tea (five courses) is traditional, with a choice of twenty different brews as well as champagne. The finger sandwiches may include cucumber and butter on brioche, salmon with Devon cream, and smoked chicken with an inventive mango-chutney relish. Just about the best scones I've ever had are here—raisin or plain. You can also provide your own caterer for non-tea events.

Colette's Cakes

WHY: For a mirthful—if fattening—time, in a sorbet-and-meringue parfait of a storefront room, each wall painted a subtle, powdery hue set off by a black-and-white tiled floor and all manner of trinkets, gewgaws, and baubles on shelves, in boxes, and on the wall. Colette Peters is an extraordinarily cunning artist and baker of fanciful confections.

ADDRESS: 681 Washington Street. **CONTACT:** Colette Peters (366-6530). **ACCOMMODATES:** 15. **COST:** From $40 per person. **A LITTLE MORE:** Parties last up to three hours; Colette will provide beverages and snacks; she's very flexible and can secure anything from fancy hors d'oeuvre to Doritos.



WEDDINGS—AND OTHER BIG DEALS

I've used 125 guests as the minimum number of people for a large wedding, going up to about 400; 100 to 125 guests for a small wedding (once you get smaller than that, you are looking at restaurants, not banquet halls). There is much overlap in this category at the 100-person mark: Spaces are flexible, e.g., have additional rooms, can put a dance floor elsewhere, and so on.

SMALL WEDDING

Le Cirque 2000

WHY: Rooms rarely come more storybook-romantic than Le Cirque's big second-floor L'Orangerie—and still maintain warmth and intimacy. The view of the courtyard of the Villard Houses, ashimmer in twinkling lights, is transporting. The nearly overwhelming grandeur of the cinquecento palazzo room, with its gilt ceiling, Baccarat-crystal chandeliers, wainscotted walls, marquetry doors, romantic murals, and ornamental fireplaces, feels just right for a grand wedding.

ADDRESS: 455 Madison Avenue. **CONTACT:** Benito Sevarin (794-9292). **ACCOMMODATES:** L'Orangerie: 140 seated, 120 with dance floor; 180 for cocktails. Library: 60 seated, 100 for cocktails. **COST:** lunch, from $40; dinner, from $90; cocktails, from $30 per person for two hours (all prices are for food alone). Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra. Weddings typically wind up topping out between $200 and $300 per person, inclusive. **A LITTLE ABOUT THE**

LE CIRQUE 2000

JACK STUDIOS, INC.

FOOD: You'll have the enviable chore of choosing among the fairest of the fare: paupiette of black sea bass swaddled in crispy potatoes, with leeks, or lobster roasted with young artichokes and wild mushrooms "in cocotte"? Such decisions. Scallops smothered in black truffles? Gnocchi with crab meat, broccoli rabe, and piquillo peppers? Whatever you choose, insist on a chocolate-covered bonsai for dessert at each table: Untamed foliage drips dark chocolate; cradled in each bifurcated nook are chocolate-covered strawberries and fanciful delectables; leaves are sugary butter cookies.

ABC Carpet & Home Parlour Cafe

WHY: Given the enticements all around as you make your way through the store to the back of the first floor, where the Parlour is, you'll probably max out your plastic before you ever get to the party. Even the chairs and tables in the café are for sale.

ADDRESS: 888 Broadway. **CONTACT:** Susan Shriber (473-3000, ext. 255). **ACCOMMODATES:** 110 (seated, with dance floor). **COST:** $5,000 room fee. You can have an outside caterer for your party or have ABC do it.

House of the Redeemer

WHY: This Italian Renaissance–style palazzo is a serene retreat resplendent with period furniture. The library is the central treasure, constructed in the fifteenth century for the ducal palace in Urbino, Italy. This perfect wedding room has a 25-foot-high vaulted ceiling, five 12-foot-tall torchères, and an Aeolian organ, along with a romantic hint of the musty elegance one associates with Venice. The reception room on the first floor, where dinner is served (dining is not permitted in the library, but hors d'oeuvre are), is a stark contrast to the luxe upstairs. With walls of snowy white, accents in lush wood, and a massive stone fireplace, it is tranquil, if a bit monastic.

ADDRESS: 7 East 95th Street. **CONTACT:** Terry Hydinger (289-0399). **ACCOMMODATES:** 90 seated, 200 for cocktails. There are three rooms: On the ground floor, the refectory–dining room and the salon–reception room; on the second floor, the library. There is also a garden. The second-floor chapel is available for wedding ceremonies, although an Episcopal minister must officiate. There is a very functional bride's prep room, with a bath and full-length mirror. *N.B.:* No amplification is permitted, and functions must end by 11 P.M. **COST:** $3,000 for the lower floor and the courtyard; an additional $500 for the use of the upstairs library. You supply the caterer.

The Greenhouse at the Mark

WHY: A skylight in the Greenhouse makes this the next-best thing to having a wedding outdoors. Its foyer connects with a large drawing room, which can be used for cocktails and dinner.

ADDRESS: 25 East 77th Street. **CONTACT:** Leslie Mastin (606-4510). **ACCOMMODATES:** The Greenhouse: 80 (seated). The Drawing Room: 30 (seated). **COST:** Wedding menus start at $165 per person, including five-hour open premium bar. Tax and gratuity are extra. A bridal suite is included for weddings with at least 50 guests.

Roosevelt Hotel Palm Room

WHY: Dine surrounded by bucolic murals and ficus trees. Oval-shaped and sunken in the center, with a breathtaking two-story frescoed ceiling. **ADDRESS:** 45 East 45th Street. **CONTACT:** Michael Lotwich (885-6195). **ACCOMMODATES:** 200 (seated). **COST:** $125 to $145 per person, including five-hour open premium bar, dinner, wedding cake. Bride and groom receive complimentary suites with champagne. Tax and gratuity are extra.

LARGE WEDDING

Bloom Ballroom

WHY: A first-rate space created by Bloom Flower Shop owner and Wall Street émigré Lesly Zamor. Barely three-months old, this versatile and refined square-ish room has become the must-have for fashionistas. The Ballroom is especially suited for weddings, with a fabulous kitchen, one of the best bride's rooms in town, and a built-in sound system. The walls are finished with Venetian plaster buffed to a high gloss, each in a different muted tone (claret, gunmetal, terra-cotta, forget-me-not).

ADDRESS: 48 West 21st Street. **CONTACT:** Lesly Zamor (620-0972). **ACCOMMODATES:** 200 seated, with dance floor; 400 for cocktails. **COST:** $5,000 for eight hours. You supply the caterer.

Drive-In Studios

WHY: Your caterer will love this space because it has a ramp provid-

Photographs: top, Hugh Kretschmer; bottom, courtesy of The Space; opposite page, Kenneth Chen. Illustrations by Carrie Leeb.

ing easy auto access. Since it's on the second floor, there isn't much of a view, but other qualities more than make up for that: It's clean (white, white, white) and column-free, has 22-foot ceilings, a 90-foot expanse of windows, five skylights, and two rooms totaling 9,000 square feet, so it's well suited for cocktails (or ceremony) in one room and sit-down dinner in another. Additionally, there is a bright anteroom with terra-cotta floors, a small kitchen (no oven), and a modern rest room.

ADDRESS: 443 West 18th Street. **CONTACT:** Kimberly Slayton (645-2244). **ACCOMMODATES:** 225 seated with dance floor, 300 seated with no dance floor, 450 for cocktails. **COST:** $4,000. You supply the caterer. **AVAILABILITY:** Saturday and Sunday for eight hours.

Studio 450

WHY: Of the nearly two dozen loft spaces I looked at, this one is arguably the most professionally operated for parties. It's well organized for social events, with a suggestion of a foyer, a semi-professional kitchen, decent and roomy bathrooms (and adequate accommodations for the bride and the coat check), sparkling white walls (and high-gloss milky floors, as well), panoramic views (the 40-foot-by-40-foot penthouse has 360-degree views), a terrace, and a very obliging owner.

ADDRESS: 450 West 31st Street. **CONTACT:** Owain Hughes (290-1400). **ACCOMMODATES:** 325 seated, with dance floor; 600 for cocktails. **COST:** $4,500 for any eight-hour period. You supply the caterer.

Jack Studios, Inc.

WHY: A clean, columned place with lustrous, almost-reflective white floors and walls and convertible flats for a decent bride's room and caterer's kitchen. There are two spaces: The smaller (3,000 square feet) North studio is ideal for a wedding ceremony, while the grander, more dramatic (6,000 square feet) Daylight studio (with windows that curve around a corner) is suffused with sunlight by day and looks across the river to the lights of New Jersey by night.

ADDRESS: 601 West 26th Street. **CONTACT:** Roy Schwalbach (367-7590). **ACCOMMODATES:** 300 seated, 600 for cocktails, more if both studios are rented for one event. **COST:** Daylight studio rents for $4,000, North for $3,000; if you only need the North briefly—for the ceremony, say—there's no room fee. You supply the caterer.

The Space

WHY: It's an attractive, pleasant expanse, with sixteen-foot ceilings, exposed-brick walls, hardwood floors, ten-foot-by-ten-foot arched windows, and extremely accommodating owners.

ADDRESS: 425 West 15th Street (in the Chelsea Market). **CONTACT:** Paul Brown (929-2442). **ACCOMMODATES:** Main hall and one studio (5,000 square feet): 125 seated, with dance floor; 225 for cocktails, with dance floor. Main hall and two studios (7,000 square feet): 175 seated, with dance floor; 300 for cocktails, with dance floor. **COST:** $5,000 for all three spaces, $3,500 for two (for eight hours). You supply the caterer.

New York Academy of Art's TriBeCa Hall

WHY: This facility is one of the very few places that gives you 24 hours for your party. And compared to other loft-type spaces, it's pretty nice-looking. The Academy is a graduate school devoted to the study of the human figure, so you'll inherit ten mammoth, plaster reproductions of some of the Western World's great sculpture, which reside in this space. The columned space is boxy (4,800 square feet), with a sixteen-foot-high ceiling, polished wood floor, and one mauve wall (the others are white). There's also a rough-hewn, semi-circular faux-stone bar.

ADDRESS: 111 Franklin Street. **CONTACT:** Joe Heissan (966-0300). **ACCOMMODATES:** 330 seated, with a small dance floor; 700 for cocktails. **COST:** $5,000 (plus $500 damage deposit and $300 for fire guards). You supply the caterer.

The Waldorf-Astoria Grand Ballroom

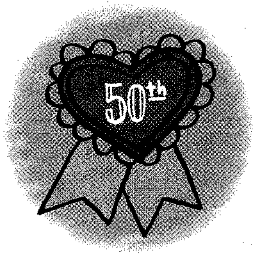
WHY: The ne plus ultra of ballrooms: opera boxes, gold filigree, five-story ceilings, and regal vermilion carpets.

ADDRESS: 301 Park Avenue. **CONTACT:** James Blauvelt (872-4757). **ACCOMMODATES:** 1,500 (seated, with dance floor). *N.B.:* There is a minimum of 800 people in the peak season, 600 off-season. **COST:** Dinners start at $120 per person, including a cocktail reception. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra.

Essex House Grand and Petit Salons

WHY: They are stunning rooms with elaborate murals, French doors, and enormous chandeliers. "Weddings should reflect the style and values of the family, not those of the catering facility," says Greg Spinelli, director of catering.

ADDRESS: 160 Central Park South. **CONTACT:** Greg Spinelli (484-5142). **ACCOMMODATES:** Grand Salon: 400 seated, 600 for cocktails. Petit Salon: 150 seated, 200 for cocktails. **COST:** Wedding menus start at $125 per person, which includes dinner, wedding cake, premium open bar with champagne, a bridal suite, and a groom's changing room. Tax and gratuity are extra.

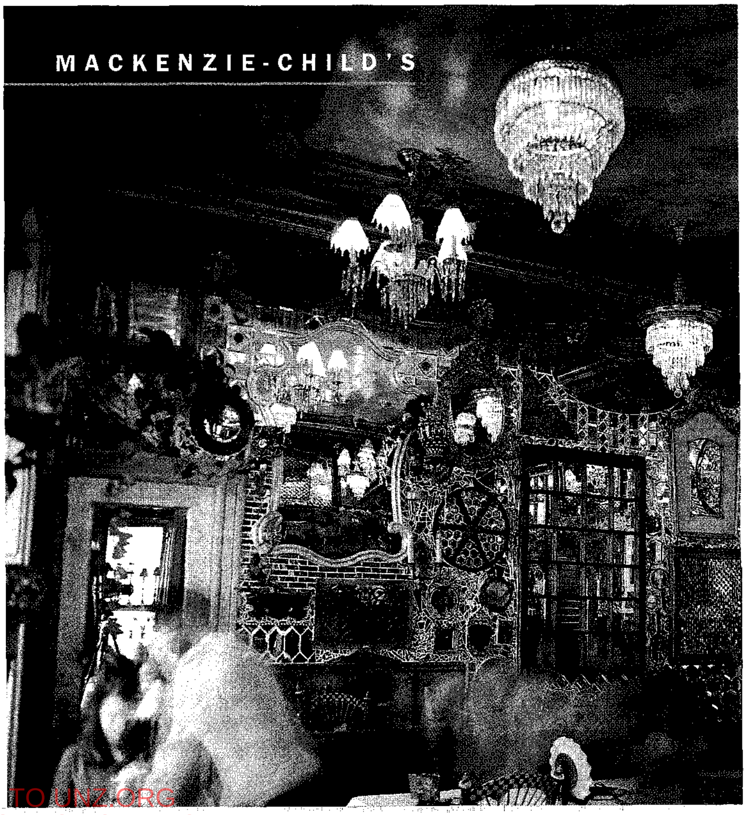


FIFTIETH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Truly splendid, grown-up choices for that most grown-up of celebrations.

Gertrude's

WHY: The clubby, first-floor salon in this newcomer is just like someone's refined and swank—but inviting—living room. There are cushiony sofas, a skylight, a fireplace, and a piano. It's been gussied up in "ish" colors: greenish, grayish, beigeish, taupeish. It's soothing and homey. Chef Laurent Manrique's cuisine is flavored with the cognac, armagnac, prunes, and apples typical of his Gascony roots.



MACKENZIE-CHILD'S

ADDRESS: 33 East 61st Street. **CONTACT:** Samantha Young (888-9127). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50. **COST:** A minimum of $6,000 to close the salon; includes three to four courses, hors d'oeuvre, and premium bar and wines. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are extra. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** I eagerly lapped up the chestnut soup with cured, dried, and smoked duck and fried lard—crunchy and creamy at once; the parsnip soup with sausage was a very close second; and the butternut-squash soup with spice-cured salmon rounded out the blue-ribbon Trifecta. The apple soup dessert is alive with complex flavors (a little cinnamon, a little armagnac, who knows what else?).

Churrascaria Plataforma

WHY: If the celebrants are youthful (and have stamina, sturdy hearts, and a propensity for meat), think about inviting at least 200 friends to camp out here for the evening. The meal itself is an uproarious theatrical event (you participate by signaling your waiter with a little paddle when you are ready for a course), with the entr'actes being trips to the bountiful salad bar. There's an ongoing floor show of sirloin, flank and skirt steaks, brisket, chicken legs, sausages, bacon-wrapped turkey, short ribs, lamb, top round, chicken hearts, pork, ham, and fish. All the main course offerings are sliced from a vertical spit at your table, and as the beef or lamb falls away from the knife, you snare your piece with a pair of tongs. The ambience crackles with levity and bonhomie; there's even a samba band.

ADDRESS: 316 West 49th Street. **CONTACT:** Michael Marchic (245-0505). **ACCOMMODATES:** Minimum to close the restaurant Sunday through Wednesday is 200; other nights, 250. **COST:** From $100 per person, depending on the night, all inclusive.

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

WHY: Reasonable is the price and priceless the experience. Whether your family came over on the Mayflower or from Minsk, you will have a moving affair in this remarkable place. Built in 1863 and partially restored ten years ago, the building is a National Historic Landmark. The space is flexible (there are two rooms that lend themselves to cocktails), but the place to do your dining is the egg-cup-size (430 square feet) tenement kitchen, with its rickety, uneven floor and flood of history. In a small and unremarkable breakfront, the staff has assembled a medley of artifacts—just stuff, really—the Lares and Penates of anonymous families. On one shelf is a weathered box stamped CANASTA PLAYING CARD TRAY, FOR A FASTER GAME, FOR MORE FUN. Did my grandmother, who grew up at 62 Baxter Street, learn canasta there? Is that why she always lured me into a game when I had a sleepover? You'll sup (unless you instruct your caterer otherwise) using mismatched flatware, glassware, and dinnerware from the museum's collection. A guided tour of the museum is part of the package.

ADDRESS: 97 Orchard Street. **CONTACT:** Sharon Seitz (431-0233, ext. 217). **ACCOMMODATES:** 25 seated, 60 for cocktails. **COST:** $750 or $850 for up to five hours (the price jump is for a second tour guide when the group is more than 25 people). You supply the caterer.

GERTRUDE'S

San Domenico

WHY: A pleasing venue for a traditional family wanting very classic Italian cuisine in a courtly but understated and genteel setting; in fact, I like the private room here much more than the nondescript main salon. The burnished Italian maplewood that forms the wainscoting comes from one very big tree; the upper parts of the walls are finished in an Italian stucco technique, fused with marble dust. Tony May's restaurant has a solid, ten-year track record and some remarkable specialties.

ADDRESS: 240 Central Park South. **CONTACT:** Marisa May (265-5959). **ACCOMMODATES:** 40 seated, 70 for cocktails. **COST:** Lunch: $37.50 per person for three courses; $65 per person for four courses, including wine. Dinner: $55 for three courses; $65 for four courses; neither price includes wine. Tax and 20 percent gratuity extra. **A LITTLE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Chef Odette Fada has elevated the simplest cooking arts to include some serious regional dishes not commonly found on Italian menus. To wit: the soft, bowl-size, homemade egg-yolk-filled raviolo, dense with ricotta and spinach in a truffle butter sauce. The homemade spaghetti à la chitarra (a guitar, the instrument on which the pasta dough is sliced), is sapid, with a simple tomato and basil sauce. Jumbo shrimps with cannellini beans and rosemary are juicy, while roasted veal loin with braised radicchio and caramelized pearl onions in a light smoked-bacon cream sauce is perfectly noble. For dessert, there's comely polenta nera, which is a chocolate, hazelnut, and cornmeal soufflé in a white-chocolate sauce, just right in the sweetness department. Also original and memorable is the pannacotta, an eggless cream custard with caramelized oranges in a balsamic-vinegar sauce.

THE PENTHOUSE

The Roof at the St. Regis

WHY: With its park view, clouds painted on a Tiffany-blue ceiling, and exquisite Austrian-crystal chandeliers, the St. Regis Roof is a spectacle of Beaux Arts opulence. The attached penthouse has wraparound windows and can be used as a pre-function cocktail space. Its catering menu is more diverse than some of the competition's (e.g., white-truffle risotto, roast rack of lamb with carrot-ginger emulsion, seared tuna with wasabi mayonnaise). **ADDRESS:** 2 East 55th Street. **CONTACT:** Arthur Backal (339-6776). **ACCOMMODATES:** 280 seated, with dancing; minimum around 150. **COST:** Sit-down-dinner menus with a full cocktail reception start at around $300 per person. Tax and gratuity are extra.

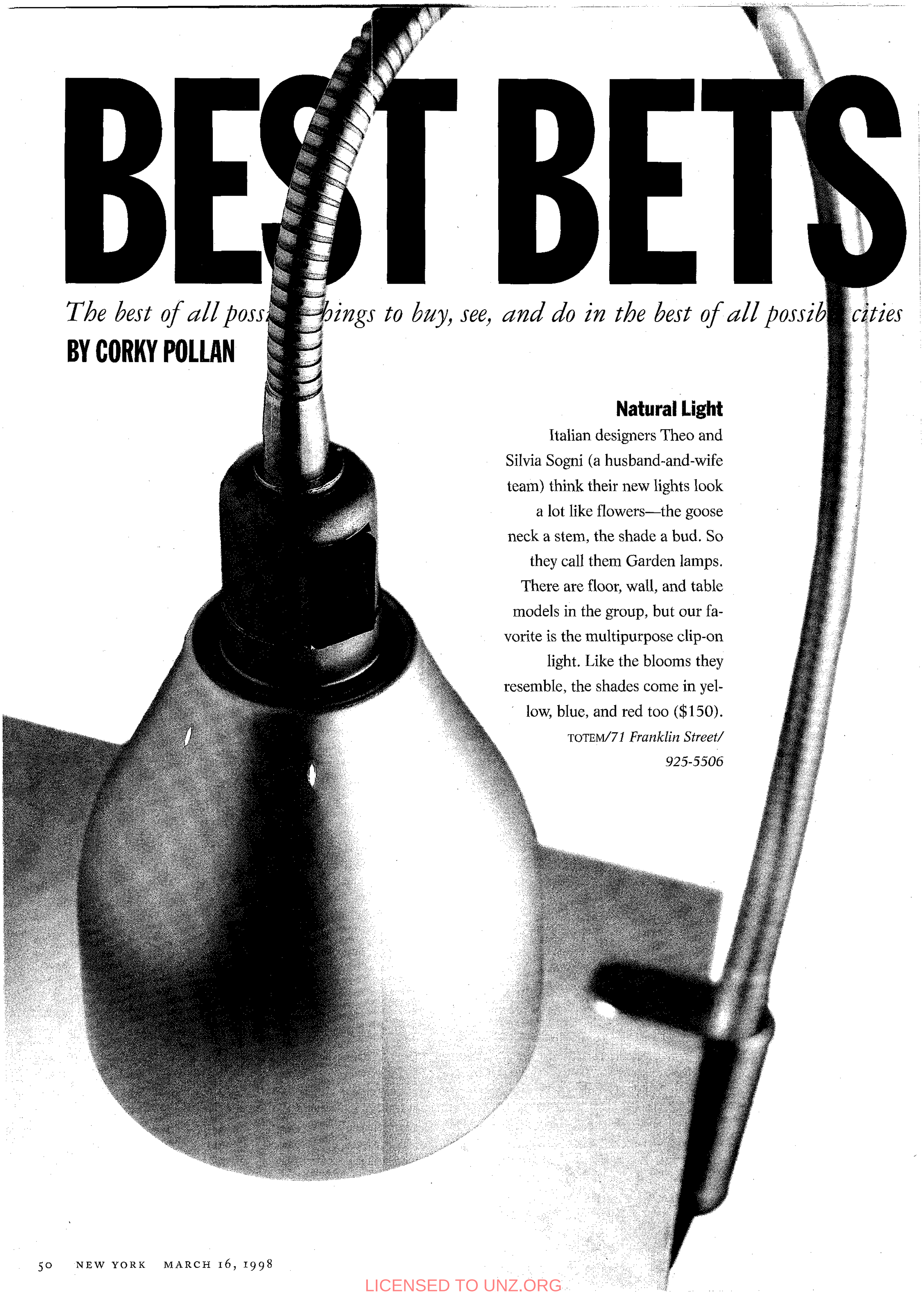
Additional reporting by Kris McNeil.

Photographs: top, Kenneth Chen; bottom, Alex Kirkbride; opposite page, Kenneth Chen.

BEST BETS

The best of all possible things to buy, see, and do in the best of all possible cities

BY CORKY POLLAN



Natural Light

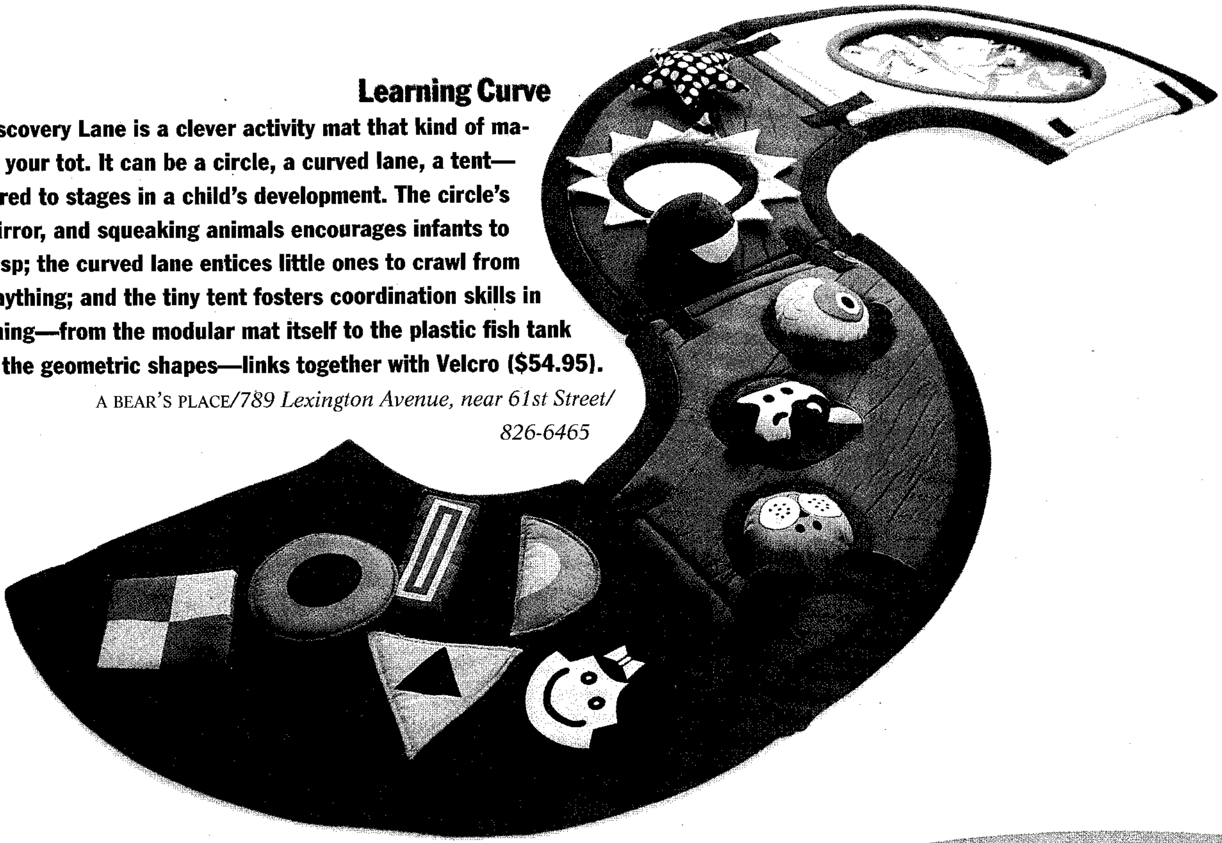
Italian designers Theo and Silvia Sogni (a husband-and-wife team) think their new lights look a lot like flowers—the goose neck a stem, the shade a bud. So they call them Garden lamps. There are floor, wall, and table models in the group, but our favorite is the multipurpose clip-on light. Like the blooms they resemble, the shades come in yellow, blue, and red too ($150).

TOTEM*/71 Franklin Street/ 925-5506*

Learning Curve

The 1-2-3 Discovery Lane is a clever activity mat that kind of matures along with your tot. It can be a circle, a curved lane, a tent—each shape geared to stages in a child's development. The circle's sunny colors, mirror, and squeaking animals encourages infants to reach and grasp; the curved lane entices little ones to crawl from plaything to plaything; and the tiny tent fosters coordination skills in toddlers. Everything—from the modular mat itself to the plastic fish tank to the geometric shapes—links together with Velcro ($54.95).

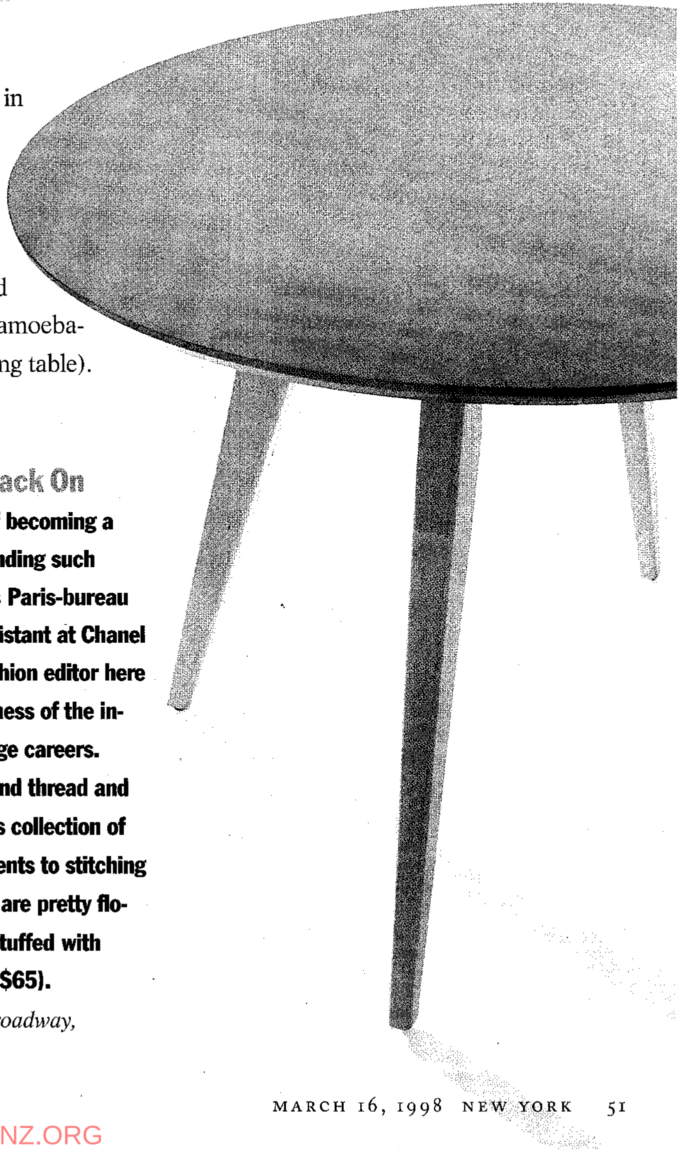
A BEAR'S PLACE/*789 Lexington Avenue, near 61st Street/ 826-6465*



Great Dane

The working relationship between Jens Risom and Hans Knoll began in 1941, when the Danish-born designer created a line of furniture for Knoll's company. Fifty-six years later, it has resumed, first with the reintroduction last year of Risom chairs and now with the reissue of his tables. A collaboration between the company and the 81-year-old Risom, the tables differ from the originals in two ways: They're made of hardwood maple (not wartime's "noncritical" cypress), and there's a redesigned amoeba-shaped coffee table (from $294 for a square side table to $690 for a dining table).

KNOLL/*105 Wooster Street/343-4000*



Something to Fall Back On

Elizabeth Allen dreamed of becoming a fashion designer before landing such seemingly plummy jobs as Paris-bureau editor at *WWD*, design assistant at Chanel in Paris, and associate fashion editor here at *New York*. But the madness of the industry drove Allen to change careers. Being a whiz with needle and thread and having amassed a fabulous collection of fabrics, she turned her talents to stitching pillows. Most of the prints are pretty florals, and the pillows are stuffed with feathers and goose down ($65).

ABC CARPET & HOME/*881 Broadway, at 19th Street/473-3000*

SALES & BARGAINS ONDINE COHANE

Conscience Decisions

Save money while saving the world: *CRIA's sale of original artwork, a catalogue to benefit medical relief, and even a service to* **protect your pooch.**

TO RAISE MONEY FOR HIV RESEARCH, the Community Research Initiative on AIDS (CRIA) has come up with an ingenious sale (which is also a find for contemporary-art lovers). Artists Kiki Smith, Donald Baechler, Pat Steir, Sandro Chia, George Condo, and others will be offering a series of original signed works on paper for $300 each. Claes Oldenburg will also donate a series of small drawings that will be sold via silent auction. *Unframed VI, Charles Cowles Gallery, 420 West Broadway (924-3934); Sat. 10–4; 3/14.*

Worldly Goods

DOCTORS OF THE WORLD—A GROUP THAT sends volunteer physicians and nurses all over the globe—has a fun catalogue of items to benefit the group's humanitarian efforts. Its merchandise is going on sale: For example, black nylon tote, was $49, now $41.65; umbrella, was $59, now $50.15. *Call 888-377-6363; 3/9–4/15.*

Classical Appreciation

THE LITTLE ORCHESTRA SOCIETY HELPS TO foster kids' interest in classical music. Now, first-time ticket-buyers for their concert for 6- to 12-year-olds—"Fanny & Felix: The Mendelssohn Kids," featuring two 13-year-old musicians, at Avery Fisher Hall—get a special price. Twenty-five-dollar tickets, now $15; $20 tickets, now $10; $15 tickets, now $8. *The Little Orchestra Society, Lincoln Center; call 704-2100 to order tickets; A.E., M.C., V.; Sat. 11 and 1; 3/14.*

The Tortoise and the Hair

FOR SNAPPY LITTLE HAIR ACCESSORIES AT affordable prices, check out Medusa's Heirlooms' moving sale. Barrettes in Swarovski crystal that sell at upscale department stores, retail $20–$160, here $6–$30; a line of *faux*-tortoise accessories (picture frame, retail $30–$50, here $9–$15). *Medusa's Heirlooms, 385 Fifth Ave., at 36th St., Suite 501 (683-6711); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 10–5; 3/9–3/13.*

A Personal Tune-Up

FOR A JUMP-START ON SPRING-CLEANING your body, Faina salon is focusing on services that rejuvenate the face, body, scalp, and feet. One-hour face-and-body-renewal treatment, was $80, now $65; three-hour revitalizing treatment, was $145, now $105; all other salon services will be 15 percent off. *Faina European Skin Care Center, 157 W. 57th St. (245-6557); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 10–8, Sat. 9–5; 3/9–4/11.*

On the Road Again

ONE OF OUR FAVORITE FURNITURE ROAD shows (composed of merchandise from the showrooms of the D&D Building and the New York Design Center) is having another sale. Furniture and accessories from Lewis Mittman, Rosecore Carpet, Donghia, Pratesi Accessories, Circa David Barrett are all priced at wholesale and below. *The Woman's Club of White Plains, 305 Ridgeway, White Plains (call 753-7920 for directions); A.E., M.C., V.; Thurs. 2–8, Fri.–Sat. 10–8, Sun. 10–5; 3/12–3/15.*

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Ondine Cohane, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, six weeks before the sale. Only sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be considered.

One Price for All

THE WOMEN'S-SHOES WHOLESALER DAVID Elliot is putting every pair on sale for $37 (retail, $79–$190). Designers include Liz Claiborne, Anne Klein, Enzo, Vera Cruz, Nine West, Charles Jourdan, and Via Spiga. Flats and heels are available, in sizes 5½M to 10M. *David Elliott, 7 W. 44th St., fourth floor (764-0565); M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 11–7, Sat. 11–5; 3/9–3/21.*

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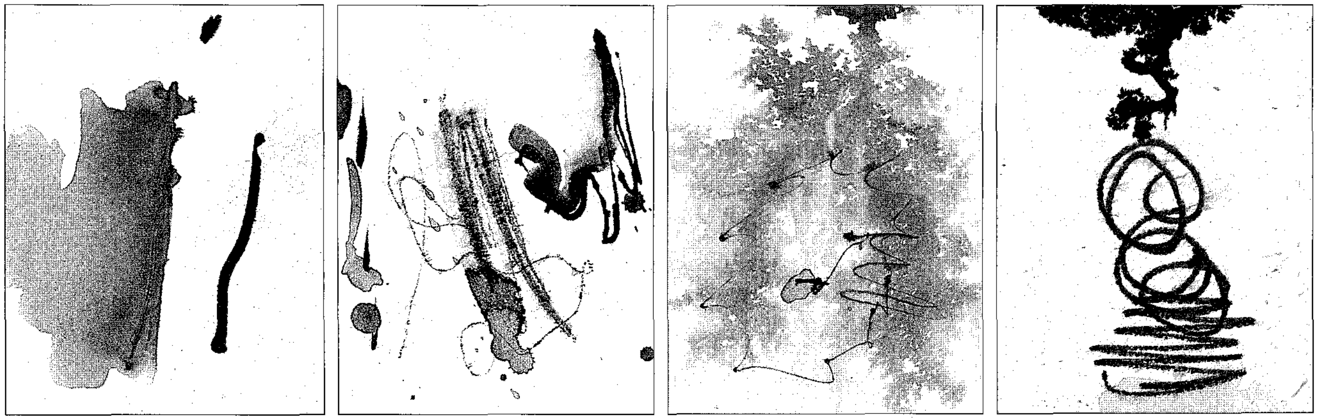

Good works of art: Pat Steir's watercolors go on sale for $300 apiece—a fraction of their usual price—to raise money for AIDS research.

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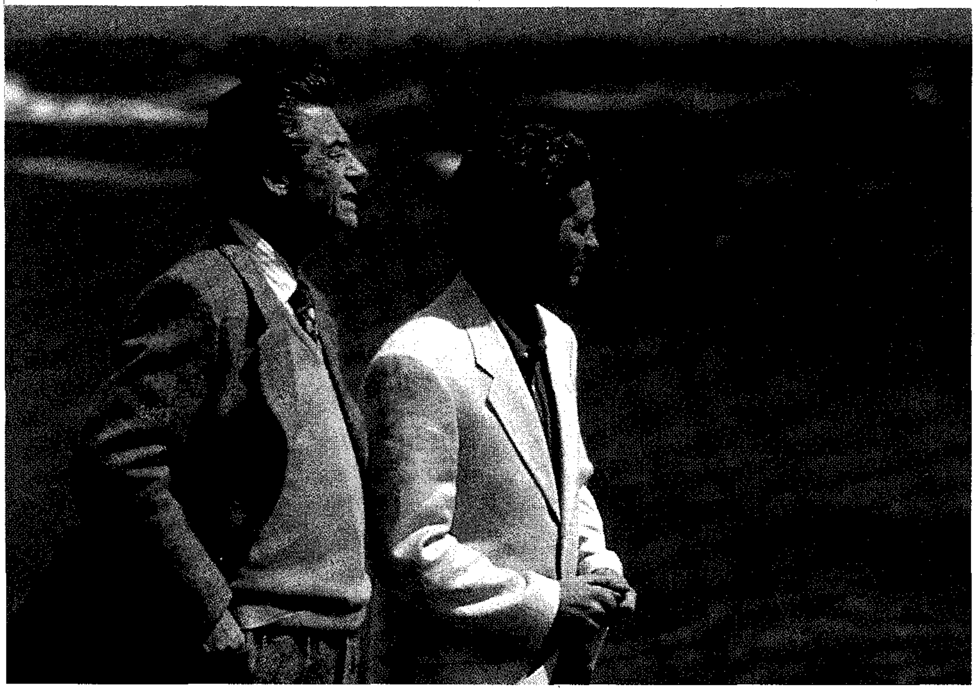
MOVIES DAVID DENBY

Humbert's Gift

Funny and sharply observed, 'Love and Death on Long Island' is 'Lolita'-like in describing the inexorable pull of illicit obsession.



Discreet object of desire: *Love and Death's* John Hurt and Jason Priestley, a writer and the actor he loves.

HERE IS THE GREAT ENIGMA OF POP, THE GREAT subversive mystery: Shallow prettiness, achieved without effort or style, may strike a susceptible soul as the most profound beauty in the world. So perhaps it's no surprise that a crusty English highbrow writer, Giles De'Ath (John Hurt), the hero of **Love and Death on Long Island,** falls in love with an image—the face of an American actor, a teen idol named Ronnie Bostock (Jason Priestley). But it certainly comes as a surprise to *Giles.* De'Ath (the second syllable is emphasized, but you may read the name as "death") is a London widower, the author of many distinguished and unreadable tomes (we get a whiff of classicism covered with mold). A creature of routine, De'Ath is entombed in a wood-paneled house; he regards the world outside with hauteur and fear. Going to the movies, he wanders into the wrong auditorium in a multiplex—the one playing the crass American comedy "Hotpants College 2"—and is about to leave in a rage when Ronnie Bostock appears as a waiter in a fast-food joint. De'Ath's astonished face, caught in the reflected light of the screen, suggests a man ravished from soul to bowels by an emotion he has never experienced before. The joke, of course, is that Jason Priestley—sideburns, full wavy hair, rotten-angel smile—looks like a second-rate teen fave from about 1954. He's not even that good-looking. But De'Ath becomes obsessed; he rants about a beauty of classical permanence. In a more practical vein, he starts a scrapbook and hides movie-fan magazines in his house as if they were the vilest pornography. He even rushes to eastern Long Island, where Ronnie lives with his girlfriend (Fiona Leowi), and turns himself into a seducer of considerable guile.

Writer-director Richard Kwietniowski has never made a feature before, but this debut effort is a triumph, a buoyant and elegant achievement—romantic and ruminative yet always precise, a comedy of longing propelled by a strong current of satirical observation. Kwietniowski plays the most beautiful effects off silence; he dwells on the baffled pause and strained hesitation. And yet the movie is never fussy or embarrassing; it finds the element of audacity in the love-struck aging artist and stays close to it. De'Ath may be a creep, but he's also a true hero. He's pulled by his obsession into the common life, and suffers the humiliation of getting things wrong. A video store is like a foreign planet to him; a TV set is an instrument of terror and wonder. The formality of English manners offers an extraordinary advantage to a nuanced actor like Hurt. With the slightest change of intonation—the verbal equivalent of a raised eyebrow—he suggests reserves of fear and rage. His sudden grin when he begins to get close to Ronnie is so flagrantly happy that one almost wants him to succeed. Everything Hurt does seems fresh, fully felt.

Love and Death on Long Island is based on a novel by an extremely witty British film critic named Gilbert Adair. I haven't been able to get hold of the book, but I would guess from the movie alone that Adair was playing with the themes of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*—examining them through the lens of Nabokov's *Lolita,* in which an English writer is mesmerized by both a beautiful American nymphet and the siren song of American vulgarity. This connection alone is a perverse joke, since Nabokov's loathing of Mann's novella is famous. In the movie, the joke of American commonness works both ways. Ronnie Bostock's pizza-parlor and locker-room movies (which Kwietniowski recreates with loving care) are appalling, but the ordinary folk whom De'Ath meets on Long Island are decent and friendly in a way that the sarcastic Londoners are not. Ronnie himself is an okay guy—no great brain or talent, but no stuck-up monster either. He's moved by what he takes to be De'Ath's interest in his mediocre movie career. Jason Priestley's performance is on the bland side, but he has one great moment. It is the look on his

Photograph by C. Reardon/CFP Distribution.

face—the shot is prolonged for what seems an eternity—when the Englishman proclaims, in the Long Island hash house Chez D'Irv, his undying love for the young actor. At that moment, Jason Priestley's Ronnie really does become someone worthy of eternal love.

THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE COEN BROTHERS' comedy **The Big Lebowski** is a cameo appearance by John Turturro as a gay Latino bowler, a dandy of the lanes who urges on his ball with insolent thrusts of the pelvis. This egotistical madman—Jesus, his name is—wears a satanic goatee and directs ferocious carnal threats at the other players. What is he doing in the movie? Well, like other Coen brothers works—*Barton Fink* and *The Hudsucker Proxy*—this new comedy could be called an epic shaggy-dog story. Just about everything winds up in it. There are abrupt, nutty jokes, surreal episodes, people flying through the air. The Coen brothers lyricize bowling, turning it into a slow-motion fantasia of heavily rolling balls and sultry pins. It's fun, for a while, watching the Coens blow off the enormous discipline required to make *Fargo,* fun to watch them do any damn thing they please. The trouble is, the bowling-as-eros motif doesn't really fit the rest of the movie's portrait of the alleys as a refuge—a place where losers, dreamers, and blowhards form a little community and find peace.

The Big Lebowski is an off-kilter thriller with a sad-sack hero—Jeff Lebowski, known as the Dude (Jeff Bridges). The Dude shuffles through life in a fumy, pothead haze; he's so slack-brained he can't finish a sentence. He gets involved in a bizarre intrigue involving another man named Lebowski, a millionaire with a promiscuous young wife who may or may not have been kidnapped. Hired to deliver the ransom money, the Dude suffers a series of disasters, the result of his own ineptitude and the arrogant interventions of his friend Walter (John Goodman), a Jewish paranoid so hostile and aggressive that he misinterprets literally everything he sees. Goodman has his monstrous melancholy; he's funny—a huffy elephant—but Bridges and Goodman stumble through far too many superfluous adventures together. It's only amusing the first time the Dude gets lost in his own story—a story so incoherent that he can't explain it to anyone. What's the point of scoring off morons who think they are cool? Jeff Bridges has so much dedication as an actor that he sacrifices himself to the Coen brothers' self-defeating conception. Even Bridges can't open up a character who remains unconscious. ▬

David Denby's 1998 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com,** *along with movie news, a schedule of upcoming openings, and more.*

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THEATER **JOHN SIMON**

Art Attack

'Art' cunningly eviscerates the highfalutin hypocrisy of modern painting; 'A Flea in Her Ear' is part bedroom farce, part comedy of manners.

SOME ASPECTS OF MODERN ART BEG TO BE SATIrized. When Kasimir Malevich painted his *White on White,* Ad Reinhardt perpetrated his "all black" paintings, and Yves Klein, *le Monochrome,* executed his all-blue panels, the results invited skeptical irony. One need not be a yahoo to view these products—and some of the minimalist art they spawned—as nonsense. There comes a point when the experts and collectors must be defied in a chorus of "That's enough!" At such time, *philistine* becomes an honorific, and the cognoscenti deserve a taste of the jawbones of an ass.

So I sympathize with Yasmina Reza's **Art,** which was the hit of Paris in 1995 and of London in 1996, and won awards in both cities. The plot is simple. Serge spends 200,000 francs on a five-by-four painting by the renowned Antrios that is all white except for some diagonal scratches. His friend Marc, who fancies Flemish painting, considers this Antrios shit, and Serge's purchase of it an insult to their friendship. He tries to enlist the third of our musketeers, Yvan, to side with him. Yvan, an overemotional and insecure young man, seems to go along with Marc's tirades. But confronted with Serge and the painting, he does what he does best: He wavers.

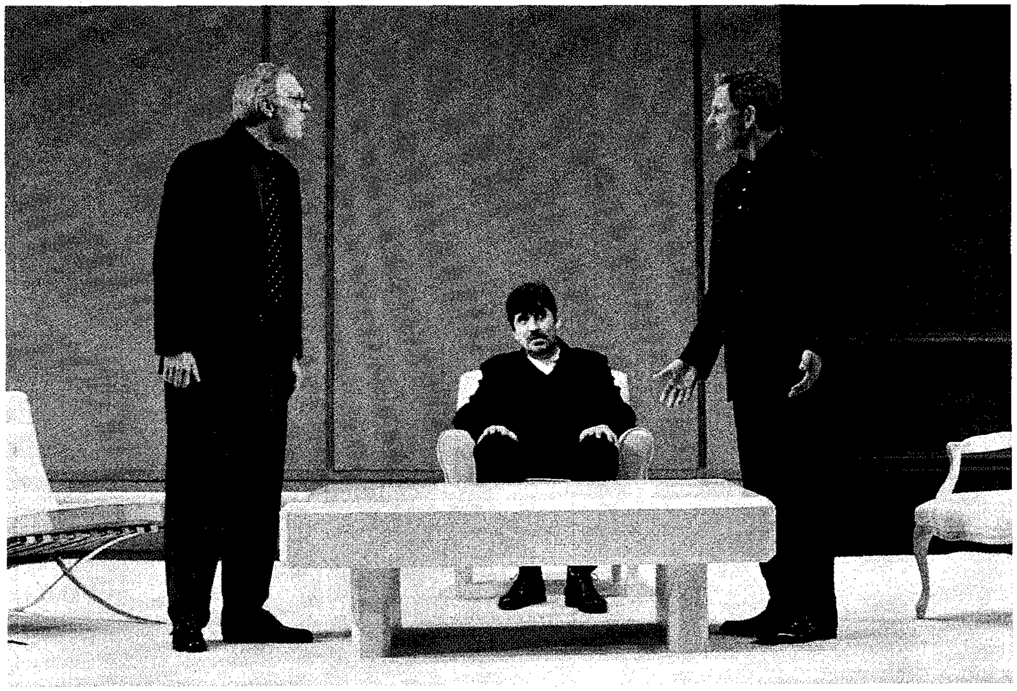
As the friends argue in circles and increasing vehemence, other problems surface: Yvan's doubts about his impending wedding, which his friends urge him to call off. Even the wording of the wedding invitation has stirred up interfamilial virulence. Serge reveals his contempt for Paula, Marc's wife, which gives rise to fury just short of fisticuffs. Everyone has frenzied outbursts. Again and again, the rage returns to the painting, which Serge now protectively removes, now provokingly re-displays. The scene shifts from one friend's apartment to another's, although the set—three white walls with slightly differing ornamentation—stays the same. But evenings to be spent in comradely outings are ruined: The painting threatens to turn good friends into bitter enemies.

Reza's cunning dialogue has been fluently Englished by Christopher Hampton; even so, it requires high-powered actors to animate it, and happily, it gets them. As Marc, Alan Alda puts to insidious use his ability to pester with polish. His urbanely crinkly face oozes disapproval; his querulous voice is like a fingernail at a scab. Victor Garber's dapper Serge harbors under the façade of a convivial man-about-town a defensive arrogance expressed with mounting bile. As Yvan, Alfred Molina is pure perfection. This Brit not only sounds as American as apple pie but also manages to look more French than a briard. He blows his top in a gorgeously Mount St. Helensian monologue, but he is equally splendid in his equivocations or as, with head swiveling like a tennis spectator's, he dumbly follows the challenges buzzing past him. His incomprehension is epic: Other actors need something to be funny with; Molina can be a riot doing nothing.

The set by Mark Thompson is not so monochromatic as it appears at first, though it too is mostly white on white; his costumes are the last word in dark, contemporary chic. Hugh Vanstone's lighting delights in these contrasting blacks and whites. Matthew Warchus has directed sparely but tellingly. Take the long silence as three frazzled men keep reaching, from nearer or farther positions, for a plate of olives on a coffee table. This nervous nibbling becomes a dazzling piece of choreography, yet no less natural and ludicrous than most of our quotidian rituals.

I am not sure the author's ending, apt as it is, wholly persuades. But then, like the rest of the play—and like so much modern art—it is a Rorschach test, but one that is, unlike other tests, a joy to take. The 100 intermissionless minutes feel elegantly right: Anything more would be markedly less.

Museum-quality: Left to right, Alan Alda, Alfred Molina, and Victor Garber in *Art*.



Photograph by Joan Marcus.

FROM DROP-DEAD SATIRE TO DEADPAN FARCE, Feydeau's **A Flea in Her Ear** holds its own, by Georges. It matters little whether a genre is high or low: The horseplay, the byplay, the wordplay's the thing—the ready wit is all. Georges Feydeau was an inexhaustible font of farce, who, however, does not receive his due because his art form is considered more form than art.

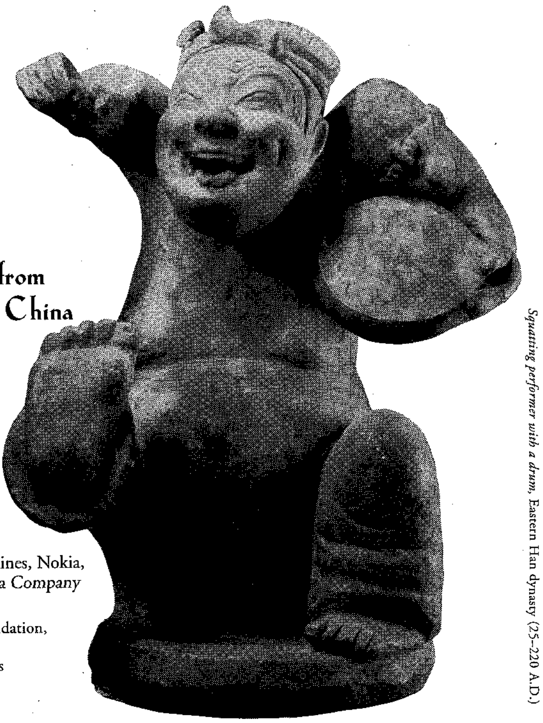
The Roundabout production of this part-drawing-room-part-bedroom farce is the handiwork of co-adapters: Jean-Marie Besset and Mark O'Donnell. A quick check of the original reveals no striking changes (hardly needed) except that such names as Lucienne, Raymonde, and Ferraillon have become Lucie, Constance, and the very un-French Battalion, presumably easier for American tongues to wrap themselves around. The much-kicked-about Poche becomes Dodo, probably because a bellhop shouldn't sound posh; Dr. Finache is now, unsubtly, Dr. Migraine. Still, these are footling changes, and most of the text remains commendably unimproved. Only Rugby, the randy Britisher at the Hotel Pussycat who speaks Feydeauish English, required some linguistic refurbishing.

Nothing would be sillier than trying to summarize a Feydeau farce, with its nonstop amorous entanglements, unconsummated infidelities, mistaken identities, and breathless chases. Much revolves around the identical looks of the businessman Victor Chandebise and the oafish bellhop Dodo, played by the same actor making rapid-change entrances. Mark Linn-Baker handles these parts deftly and engagingly, and Bill Irwin, who practices this choreographic farce himself, has staged it winningly.

But this is not the only type of farce needed, and Irwin, not a real director, has turned virtually all characters into mini-Irwins, which proves especially unsuited to women. Not that the actresses he chose have much to contribute in any case. Angie Phillips, as Mme. Homenides de Histingua, affects a pseudo-aristocratic delivery almost as impenetrable as the utterances of Camille, who has a cleft palate unable to negotiate consonants—a role whose vowels Shaun Powell renders with charmingly liquid desperation. As the big bully hotelier Battalion, James Lally rants merrily and (literally) kicks ass with finesse. Mark McKinney scores as a madly jealous, pistol-brandishing Spaniard, whereas Richard B. Shull's Dr. Migraine is as unfunny as his name.

There are some nice touches, such as the superb visual tour de force near the end, and some dreadful ones, such as Alice Playten's singing a grossly humorless song of her own making. Douglas Stein's sets and Bill Kellard's costumes are agreeable, as are the moments where Feydeau's humor is indestructible. But *A Flea in Her Ear* is no feather in the Roundabout's cap.

CHINA 5000 YEARS



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Squatting performer with a drum, Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 A.D.)

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Conduct Becoming

Budding maestros get a rare opportunity to practice with the real thing; the Dicapo Opera's young singers make the most of their material.

HOW DOES A CONDUCTOR GET TO CARNEGIE HALL? Practice, practice, practice, according to the old punch line—not especially useful advice when the "instrument" conductors need to practice on is made up of more than 80 live musicians. Even conservatories cannot provide that essential accommodation in any regular way, and once out on their own, budding maestros generally find themselves practicing all alone in front of a mirror with a baton and with a record playing in the background. To help alleviate this situation, if only for a week, Carnegie Hall itself recently gave nine young conductors from Australia, England, Finland, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States an opportunity to hone their skills during one of the many valuable professional training workshops that Carnegie sponsors. The Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra from Helsinki provided the instrumentalists, and a noted instructor was also on hand: Jorma Panula, a Finnish conducting professor whose students have already taken possession of many prestigious podiums around the globe.

Panula's method of teaching this most mysterious of musical disciplines, we are told, is based on an approach that cultivates a student's individuality instead of dwelling on niceties of stick technique and the subtle psychological devices necessary to persuade a large group of musicians to obey the leader's will. Esa-Pekka Salonen, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and one of Panula's most famous protégés, flatly says that his mentor has no method at all. He merely tries to arouse the proper instincts in his pupils while raising the right questions that might encourage young conductors to develop their own methods independently and resolve their own problems.

Eavesdropping on just one open rehearsal did not really yield enough information to say exactly how Panula achieves those sensible goals. Each of the nine conductors had about ten minutes to work with the orchestra on a repertory consisting of the Sibelius Fifth and Seventh Symphonies, Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks* Concerto, and the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth. Panula remained to one side, keeping a beady watch on his young charges through a spyglass strapped to his hand. Since he scarcely uttered a word all afternoon, Panula apparently exercises a subliminal influence over his students, unless he takes them all aside later on and gives them some kind of useful analysis of their work habits and communication skills. I have a feeling that at least part of this pedagogue's success in training so many prominent Finnish podium personalities—the latest is Sakari Oramo, Simon Rattle's much-heralded successor in Birmingham, England—is closely tied in with his country's extensive and supportive classical-music network. Finland gives talented young conductors not only financial support, but every chance to appear with professional orchestras even while still in school. In any case, most auditors at Carnegie's workshop probably left with the impression that a conductor more or less learns what has to be done as a baby does when tossed into the water—either swim or sink.

Three lucky survivors were chosen to lead the formal "graduation concert": Josep Caballé-Domenech from Spain (Beethoven), Andrew Robinson from Australia (Stravinsky), and Kari Kropsu from Finland (the Sibelius Seventh), with Salonen himself presiding over Sibelius's Fifth. Everything was thoughtfully conceived and solidly played, although the most impressive aspect of the performances was the overall freshness of musical response—no doubt partly a result of the youthful enthusiasm of the Sibelius Academy Orchestra itself. For sheer podium charisma, though, I was more impressed earlier in the week with the work of Bundit Ungrangsee from Thailand, currently assistant conductor of the Santa Rosa Symphony in California. If a conductor's ultimate unteachable gift is the ability to galvanize an or-

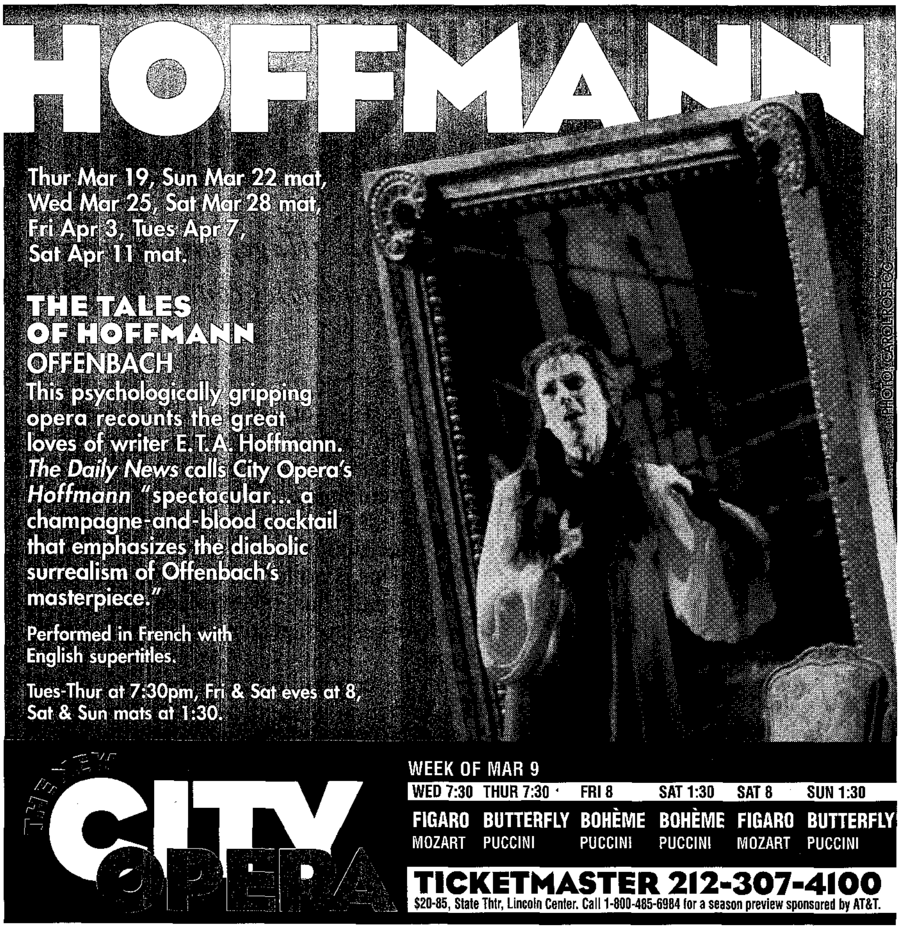
Conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Sibelius Academy Symphony Orchestra.

Photograph by Steve J. Sherman.

chestra through body language, eye contact, and an arresting physical presence, this wired-up musician definitely has a major future.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG SINGERS TO PRACtice their profession are nearly as scarce as those for conductors, especially now that so many of New York's smaller opera companies have folded. One that still seems financially healthy and artistically thriving is the Dicapo Opera Theatre, under the direction of Michael Capasso and Diane Martindale, operating out of a comfortably appointed 204-seat theater at 184 East 76th Street. I've seen several enjoyable productions over the past couple of years, including a repertory perennial (*La Bohème*), a welcome revival (Tchaikovsky's *Yolanta*), and a contemporary American classic (Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*).

Dicapo's latest offering was **A Chekhov Trilogy,** three operas by Richard Wargo based on short stories by the Russian author. An evening of one-acters is always tricky business—even Puccini couldn't please everyone with his *Il trittico*—although Wargo's trilogy tries hard to be audience-friendly by serving up a bit of everything: bedroom comedy (*The Seduction of a Lady*), poignant, tear-in-the-eye romance (*A Visit to the Country*), and madcap farce (*The Music Shop*). Wargo belongs to the conservative but honorable school of American opera composition along with Jack Beeson, Carlisle Floyd, and Dominick Argento, all expert at writing lyrical and theatrically effective music for the stage based on traditional models. There is an abundance of tuneful arias and skillfully worked-out ensembles in Wargo's three scores, all designed to flatter the voice and underscore dramatic points against an apt and inventive orchestral underpinning. Things don't always pan out—the first opera takes 45 minutes to accomplish what could have been done in 20, and the bittersweet lyricism of the second tends to be rather anonymous. The energy level rises in the final episode, a delicious bit of insanity as a meek husband desperately ransacks a Russian music shop to find an appropriate song for his Wagnerian dragon of a wife, who unexpectedly materializes in a sequence of hilarious hallucinations. Although *A Chekhov Trilogy* occasionally tests an audience's patience, it also gives a dozen talented young singers rewarding material to work with, and Dicapo's mostly splendid cast responded eagerly to Capasso's lively staging. Under Steven Crawford's confident musical direction, a quartet of mellifluous voices tended to the delicate central work (Carla Wood, Cristina Castaldi, Eric S. Thomas, and Barton Green), while four expert buffos—Gregory Harrell, Wren Harrington, Marc Molomot, and Catherine Kelly—romped merrily through this antic music shop. ■



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DANCE TOBI TOBIAS

School Ties

In the global village, can the world's great ballet academies continue to turn out singular dancers?

TIME WAS, NATIONAL STYLES OF CLASSICAL DANCING—Russian, French, English, American—were distinctive dialects of an enduring language. The Russians emphasized a sculptural quality and soulful expressiveness; the French, a delicate precision, along with witty charm—and so on. This is no longer true. A homogenization of style has taken place, minimizing the regional differences and, in some cases, undermining local strengths.

True, most world-class ballet companies still breed their own dancers from childhood in academies closely attached to the parent troupe. St. Petersburg's Kirov Ballet—which counts among its alumni Nijinsky, Pavlova, Balanchine, and Baryshnikov—still relies on its **Vaganova Ballet Academy** (founded in 1738), whose junior, intermediate, and senior students recently appeared at the Brooklyn Academy of Music along with a handful of the Kirov's younger stars. The New York City Ballet is fed by the Johnny-come-lately of the grand training institutions, the **School of American Ballet** (established in 1934), which joined the Russian dancers in Brooklyn for a single performance flanked by public symposia.

The joint performance may have been intended to show the link between the Kirov tradition and the training program of SAB, which was co-founded by Balanchine. But the Vaganova Academy display, as well as four backstage classes for the students that I had the privilege of observing, suggested that distortions of Balanchine's modernization of his own inheritance, along with a fierce will to win the international pyrotechnical competition, have come to dominate the Russian school.

While many of the great stars of mid-century Soviet ballet were sturdily built and of average height, today's Vaganova girls and young women reflect the now-popular fashion-mannequin ideal: height that comes from eerily long legs, slenderness bordering on emaciation. The training for the female contingent stresses two elements, one being suppleness in the spine. This was part of the *old* Russian school, but it was used in the past to create pliant, musical dancing, not for the easy thrill of uncanny acrobatic contortion. The second element dominating the present school is the cultivation of a preternatural flexibility in the hip joint, which permits an extension of the leg so high, the toes seem to be rapping at the door of the heavens. This mistaken preoccupation affects all of the adagio work—and, oddly, some of the allegro work too—to the detriment of dancing. It ruins harmony of line (a pillar of classicism and formerly a Russian specialty), weakens the dancer by depriving her of a secure center, and fractures the desired flow of movement into a meaningless chain of discrete steps.

For the Vaganova men, high-speed, ferociously energetic multiple turns have become a full-time obsession. No wonder the fellows in the senior class look so sullen: They've been robbed of their souls. The virtuoso feats, which might be impressive if used sparingly, have more to do with circus than with dancing, since they are neither musical nor expressive. And they make an odd match with the long, floating leaps that are the male dancers' other current specialty.

The Vaganova Ballet Academy's senior class in *La Bayadére/Shades.*

Photograph by Dan Rest/BAM Press.

Despite fears about the future evoked by the appearance of the Vaganova Academy—will the current mannerist style for the pulled-taffy women and the kamikaze-style goals for the dour men prevail?—the students' visit here was a happy event. The fact that it was allowed—for the very first time—attested to the new political freedom in Russia, which will foster better international communication among artists. The sight of so many bodies designed-to-order for the academy's goals indicates a formidable talent pool, one not undermined, as is America's, by a dearth of boys. The youngest students' impeccable execution of their demanding assignments—from classroom exercises to miniature ballets—demonstrates rigorous training accepted by its initiates with avidity and delight. The accomplishment at all levels is uniformly high, though it's hard to see any potential stars apart from the 16-year-old Ekaterina Osmolkina, who already possesses a ballerina's radiance and aplomb.

The School of American Ballet weighed in for the occasion with a lecture-demonstration narrated by Suki Schorer, a mainstay of the institution. Her theme was Balanchine's radical (though the word wasn't uttered) extension of his Russian inheritance and his incorporation of American influences such as jazz. Interestingly, the varied anatomy of the senior students who illustrated her theories showed how the NYCB has retreated in the past decade or so from the preference Balanchine showed for the willowy female, once he had enough bodies to pick and choose from. The young men and women alike also displayed far fewer of the wrongheaded exaggerations in training observable in their Russian counterparts. The Americans' level of achievement is more uneven, their dancing style wilder and more individual. Local dance fans often see SAB's younger students when they perform the children's roles in Balanchine's ballets and the pre-professionals in their own annual showcase in May. Do we find them more thrilling and more touching than their Russian counterparts simply because they're ours?

As I've said, another of the great ballet academies is the French. The **École de Danse** of the Paris Opéra Ballet (founded in 1661) demonstrates symbolically how essential it is to its parent company in a ritual known as the *grand défilé*. Performed on gala occasions, it is a solemn, elegant parade of the school's 100 students, from neophyte 9-year-olds to graduating teenagers, followed by the 150 members of the company, rank by rank, from corps to *étoile*. (They seem to be bearing an invisible banner that proclaims WE ARE LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF A MAGNIFICENT TRADITION.) Witnessing a *défilé* lately in Paris (along with intelligent and beautiful performances of the repertory), I recalled advanced classes I watched at the academy's headquarters a few years back. The students were breathtakingly adept, pure and precise in their classical technique, with a demeanor that combined the noble yet modest manners of ballet and the innate chic of the French. Their schooling is arguably the soundest being offered in the ballet world today, and it clearly suffuses the work of the company. But the mark of the future was on the young women—in their attenuated bodies and uncannily high, fluid leg extensions. These are signs as clear as the pervasive golden arches of McDonald's.

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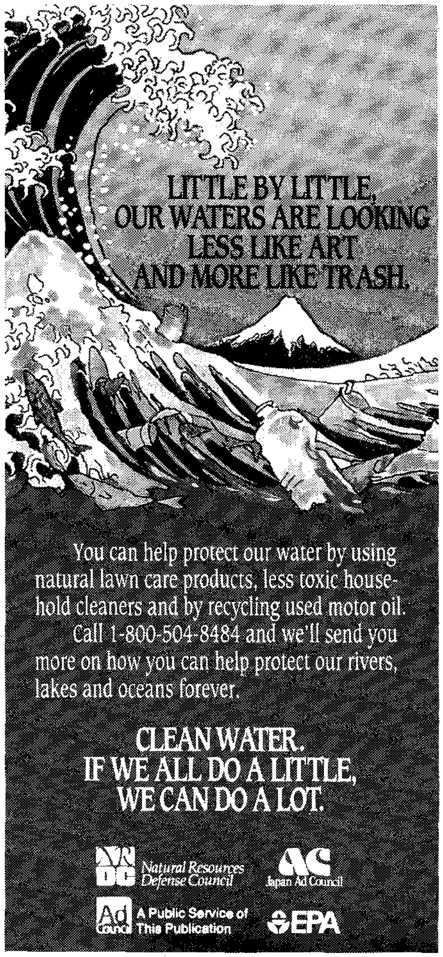
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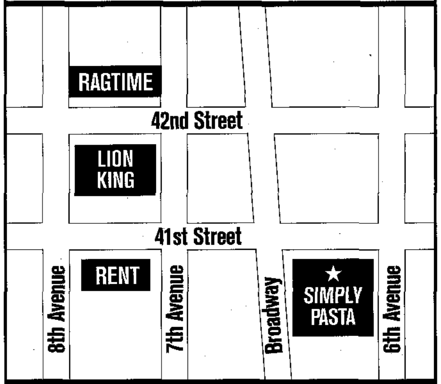

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Captain's Outrageous

Revisiting 'Moby Dick,' USA Network offers some improvements on John Huston's film—notably in Patrick Stewart's grand, mad Ahab.

Fish story: Stewart as Captain Ahab, looking for a meaningful encounter with a whale.

Photograph by Oliver Upton/USA Network.

FIRST OF ALL, THEY DIDN'T CHANGE THE ENDING. This may not seem much to be relieved about, but after what Roland Joffé did a couple of years ago to *The Scarlet Letter*—throwing in all that stuff Nathaniel Hawthorne so carelessly omitted, like comely slave girls, truculent Algonquins, lynchings, witch hunts, and a pony-cart trip to a Carolina Disneyland for Hester and Dimmesdale and their demon-child; not to mention, if impossible to forget, Demi Moore and Gary Oldman burrowing in a grain bin like a pair of randy moles while being chirped at by a dirty bird—we are entitled to worry about what a bunch of Australians might do to another classic of American literature in a cable-TV mini-series rendition of **Moby Dick** (Sunday and Monday, March 15 and 16; 8 to 10 P.M.; USA). I am happy to report that Ahab goes down with the white whale, and so does everyone else on the luckless *Pequod* except, of course, Ishmael, who uses a coffin as a canoe.

Secondly, Patrick Stewart actually improves on Gregory Peck, the Ahab in John Huston's 1956 film. I sometimes wonder if Stewart's Picard in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* wasn't overpraised simply because William Shatner couldn't act at all. But here, baptizing harpoons with blood and rum, Stewart embodies the mystique and madness of command. His craziness—"I'd strike the sun if it insulted me!"—is Greco-Elizabethan. Whereas Peck was too nice a guy for either a peg leg or demonic possession. As a sort of homage, Peck shows up here, too, this time playing Father Mapple. And he's *still* too nice, understating the Jonah business that Orson Welles so shamelessly hamboned as Mapple in the Huston film.

Henry Thomas's Ishmael is as eager and callow as Richard Basehart's. Piripi Waretini's Queequeg, scrimshawed with lurid tattoos, will remind you of one of those Sumo-size Samoans who ends up playing defensive tackle on a pro football team. Ted Levine, in the impossible role of Starbuck, is a slice of Hamlet on wry toast, or Adlai Stevenson at Masada. The rest of the doomed crew, excluding little Norman Golden as mad Pip, veer from ribaldry to cannibalism before they are grossly weathered. It's as if the populace of Heaven's Gate had booked the *Titanic*. Instead of Hale-Bopp or icebergs, they get a Moby who, between Sunday and Monday, ups his fearful aspect from a huge cube of albino sausage to an apocalypse with flippers. *Jaws* may have permanently stretched our synapses out of shape for any more cinematic seafaring suspense. But it's still a thrill to see Stewart crucified on a cross of blubber. And in Antarctica we'll find, if not God or Leslie Fiedler, at least Prometheus.

Finally, in this Franc Roddam picture there seems to be more of Melville's poetry—that King James Bible–*King Lear* Shakespeare diction, those ghostly echoes of Homer, Milton, and Dante—than screenwriters Huston and Ray Bradbury managed. From pulpit and bridge, in low parody and wild eloquence, the unstable characters—old Ahab hounding absolutes, young America embarking on an empire—strut, fret, and howl. Not that we get everything. That's what the *book's* for—the most idiosyncratic in our literature until Faulkner, as well as a template for road novels from *Huck Finn* to *On the Road* and maybe even *Lolita*. Why is it that when men in American novels feel despondent about manhood, they invariably abandon wives and kids for some sort of Aboriginal walkabout to kill other men or fish, bag a unicorn, waste a hippogriff? Where are the novels with heroes like Walt Whitman, or Charles Kuralt? *(continued on page 64)*

RESTAURANTS **HAL RUBENSTEIN**

Sequel Opportunity

Steve Hanson nets the Upper East Side singles at his Atlantic Grill; Jean-Claude Iacovelli's family of nook restaurants increases by one.

BE FIRST ON THE BLOCK IF YOU MUST, BUT GENerally, those foolish enough to dine at a restaurant during its initial month of business deserve everything they get. And then you walk into **Atlantic Grill** after it's been open nine days. Busy? If this were a bake sale, the church elders would be ecstatic. Except that not only is your reservation noted, but a table awaits. You've hardly taken in the room when a voice from above asks whether you'd care for a cocktail. A waitress, pad poised with working pen, fields your requests for Sauza margaritas, no salt, and dirty martinis. She delivers them exactly right, hands out menus, recites specials, gives prices, asks if there are questions.

No, it's not your imagination running away with you. You're just witnessing the rare restaurateur who has found his formula. Unlike chain restaurants, which replicate success as a Jiffy pattern, the shrewd proprietor seldom resorts to rote, especially when previous works are thriving nearby. So details differ, menus vary, décor changes. The basis for the formula, however, is more elemental—a perceptible atmosphere, an only seemingly lighthearted focus on service, and, above all, letting the customer presume he's always in charge.

Steve Hanson's Blue Water Grill provides a canny, multi-tiered perspective for young Union Square regulars who've outgrown Coffee Shop table-bopping and would rather nod. Up on Columbus Avenue, his Ocean Grill is familial and decibelly elevated (ever notice how often dinner conversations on the West Side climax as the harangue in the last panel of a Feiffer cartoon?).

Neither concept would work at Atlantic Grill, smack in the middle of the Upper East Side, at the former site of that keeper of the flaming plaid, Jim McMullen's. Hanson knows his new customer, though. The bar area radiates sleek-edged, boardroom sophistication; the main dining space evokes a genteel City Island; the far dining sanctum is a postmodern Oyster Bar. The last is the most desirable: The heat generated by the desperate eye movements of slightly tipsy bar singles could clot cream. And the balmy hues and soundproofing of the main area are marred by jarringly inferior chrome detailing and summerhouse-cheesy overhead lamps.

Happily, there is no skimping in the kitchen's output. In fact, Atlantic's menu is a well-edited roster, incorporating prevailing seafood predilections—raw bar, pan-Asian sushi bar, wood-burning grill, old-fashioned lobster house—while avoiding discordant course pairings.

Appetizers possess the most seductive hook. Crunchy and greaseless calamari are dunked in a lime-miso sauce that could be used throughout the meal. Savory slices of hickory-roasted bass are buoyed by cucumber-ginger salsa. Green-Thai-curry mussels need just a smidge more fire to cause a tempest in a clay pot. Lobster bisque is solid, but the lobster roll is mushy, gaining zip-ola from a pepper glaze. If all the maki had the zest of the oyster and tuna rolls, they'd rival the appetizers. Sushi options are limited but fresh, well cut, and handsomely presented.

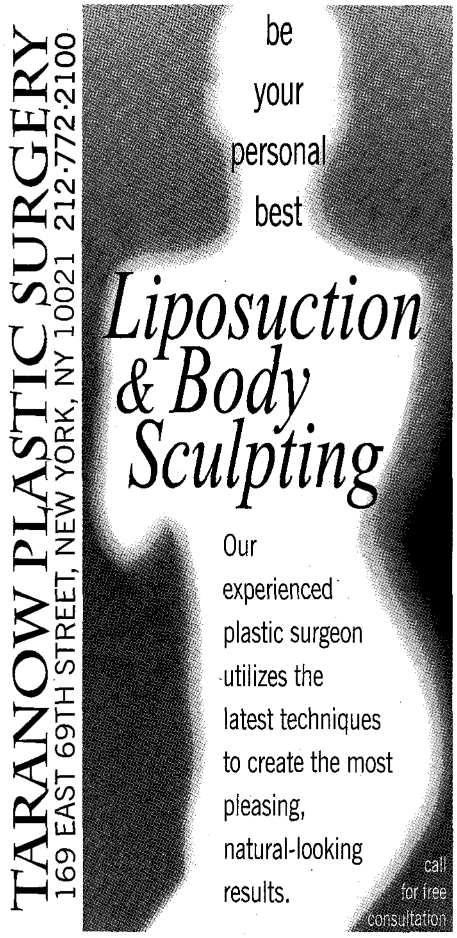
Considering what Sparks charges for lobster, Atlantic is one of the few places where foodists can venture uptown for a bargain. For once, order your lobster grilled. It may be less drool-down-your-chin juicy, but the flavor is more exotically musky and intense.

There's too much cleverness to the entrées. A porcini "dusting" buries the swordfish, and mahimahi (such an overrated fish!—the Sheryl Crow of seafood) disappears under a BBQ glaze. Get them grilled instead. Salmon—a fish that invites challenge—has a fortuitous herb-crusted wrapping. Red-Thai-curry "bouillabaisse" sounds too cute, but it's messy fun. Meaty crab cakes are enhanced by fennel, free-range chicken requires no apologies from the seafood-hater in you, and there's nothing wrong with filet mignon in spiky bourbon sauce that evicting horseradish from the mashed potatoes wouldn't fix.

Desserts, unfortunately, seem like an afterthought. The one stroke of originality, the house sushi dessert

Mussel man: Chef Joseph Boyer (far left) slaves over a hot stove at Atlantic Grill (left).

Photographs by Joe Fornabaio.



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Nov. 14-15—Dec. 5-6
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NATALIE H. ROGERS, M.S.W.
TALK POWER
TRAINING SEMINARS

(vanilla and banana-coconut hand rolls), strains for wit and collapses into a gooey sooey. Valhrona cake, crème brûlée, Key-lime tartlet, and the best of the lot—a Granny Smith–apple crisp—are more predictable than the glare from brass buttons on blue blazers around the room. But you should have known that before you got here. Steve Hanson did. And most everyone's sure glad he came.

Atlantic Grill, 1341 Third Avenue, near 77th Street (988-9200). Lunch, Monday through Saturday 11:30 A.M. to 4 P.M.; Sunday brunch, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M.; dinner, Monday through Thursday 5 P.M. to midnight, Friday and Saturday till 12:30 A.M. Appetizers $5.50–$9.50; entrées $14.50–$19.95. A.E., M.C., V.

THE GRIN IS ROGUISHLY QUICK AND WIDE. The chin tilts down as the sparkling eyes gleam seductively up and at you. His body language unfailingly says "nothing to it." Jean-Claude Iacovelli always looks as if he's about to pull a fast one.

Yet I doubt there is anyone within arm's reach of a bottle of Brouilly and a tarte Tatin who's a savvier cat. While ostensibly displaying less effort than it takes Kevin Bacon to sneer, Iacovelli keeps transforming ungainly vest-pocket spaces into golden-lit bistros of breezy enchantment. What's more, the tantalizing menus of Jean-Claude, Cafe Lure (now sold), and Soho Steak, featuring lobster, crab, foie gras, and filet, list prices so head-scratchingly low, something's gotta be funky. Only you keep coming back, sampling the entire menu, until you discover, in utter capitulation, this food is just too good.

This time, Iacovelli has gone Italian, "in honor of my parents." **Velli** does them and their son proud. Except for a crumbling bruschetta and an ordinary veal chop, all the choices are a marvel of spice-wielding dexterity and economy. How does he produce this wonderful a pappa pomodoro with truffle oil for $5? Or an almost fiery tuna carpaccio with marinated fennel for $6? And though it may not be a whole lobster floating in a luscious artichoke-onion-and-fennel broth, at $15, it might just let you make that next Hamptons house payment on time.

"You think I don't care, don't you?" he cries when we complain that his chocolate mousse is still too airily French for Americans' dark-chocolate lust. "You see when you come back." We come back. The mousse is thick, dense, divine. "I call everyone," Iacovelli explains with glee. "Twenty different recipes I collect. But finally, I found it. It just takes a little effort." You'd never know it. And that's the beauty of it.

Velli, 132 West Houston Street (979-7614). Open daily 6 P.M. to midnight. Appetizers $4–$6; entrées $12–$15. Cash only. ■

Leonard *continued from page 62*

Instead of Spanish bull, Quaker oats? In fact, Ahab was a Quaker.

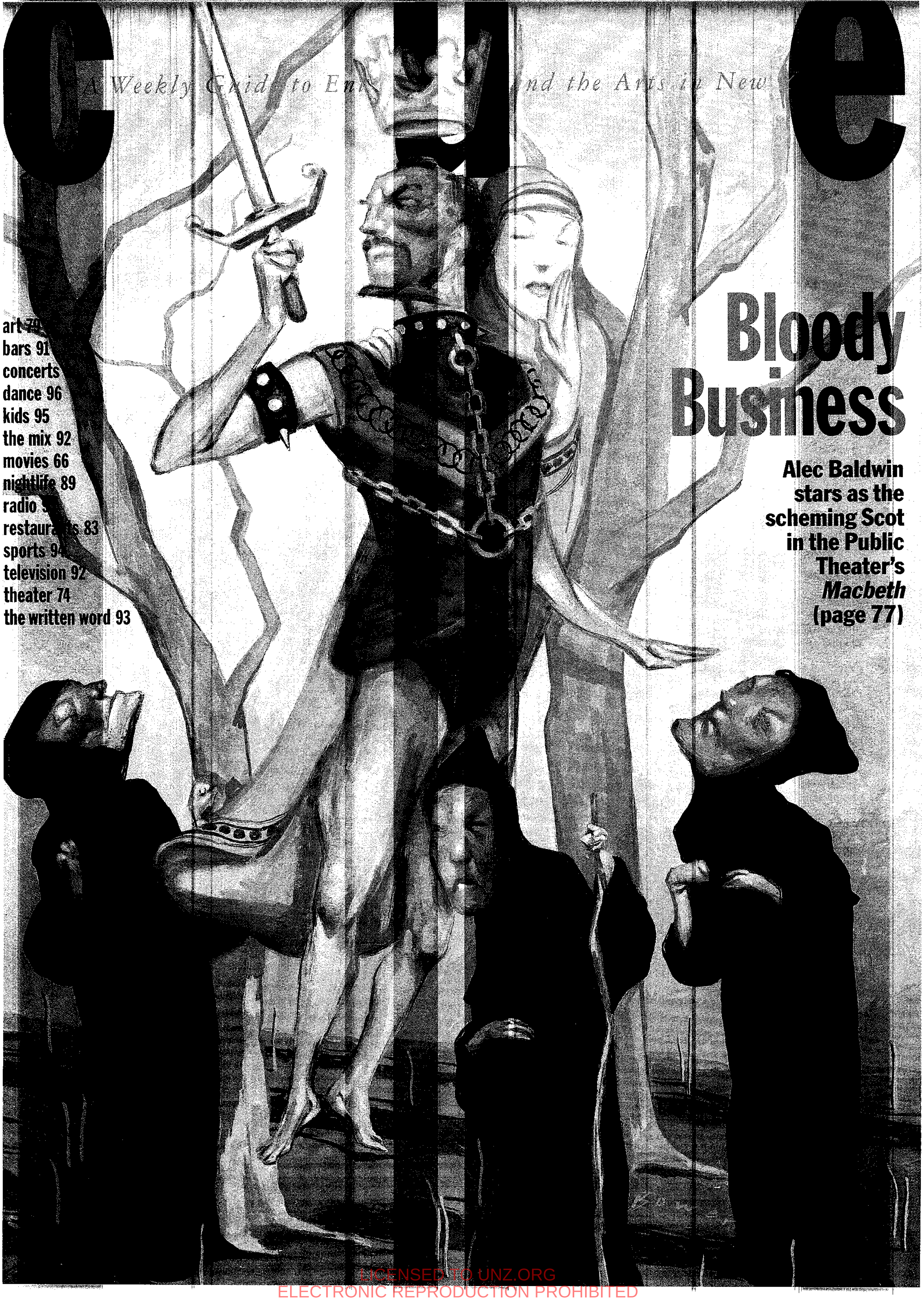
THE ONLY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN **The Informant** (Sunday, March 15; 8 to 9:45 P.M.; Showtime), the cable adaptation of a Gerald Seymour novel about Northern Ireland in the eighties, and *The Informer,* Liam O'Flaherty's novel and John Ford's film about the 1922 Irish Rebellion, is one of assonance. In *The Informer,* we ended up sympathizing with Victor McLaglen, even though he sold out an I.R.A. buddy for pieces of British silver, because we learned something about how means corrupt ends. In *The Informant,* while director Jim McBride and screenwriter Nicholas Meyer lay claim to evenhandedness and paler shades of gray, we are browbeaten into believing that only the English are innocent—if, perhaps, dangerously so.

As Gingy, Anthony Brophy has already done five years in prison for terrorist activities, and "gone south" to recover his humanity. But the I.R.A. requires his rocket-launching skills to assassinate a Belfast judge, and blackmails him into obedience by threatening his family—after which the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Timothy Dalton) and the British military (Carey Elwes) coerce him into testifying against his I.R.A. bosses. It's a fine, if odious, role for Dalton, and an engaging one for Elwes, who befriends Brophy, with awful consequences. And, in a Dublin tricked up to look like bombed-out Belfast, the movie spirals downward into sickening complicities.

I yield to no one in my loathing for terrorists, child-killers all of them, whatever their politics. From Gulag and death camp to Shining Path and Hamas; from Pol Pot and pink-cheeked bombers of abortion clinics to the secret police in Jakarta or Jerusalem, their cold, invariable, and contemptuous purpose is to dominate, humiliate, commodify, and dispossess; to create, as in the nightmares of Kafka and Beckett, mazes in which the rest of us are lab-rat matters of interpretation. But add up the atrocities in *The Informant,* and you discover that they're almost all on the Republican side. It's the I.R.A. that first blackmails war-weary Gingy; that orders the murder of a judge; that tortures, with kicks and cigarette burns, a 14-year-old boy wrongly suspected of "touting"; that rigs a motorbike to kill Elwes; that first bombs a "safe house" to frighten Gingy's wife, Roisin (a splendid Maria Lennon), and then rapes her. Irish Brophy says to British Elwes, I kid you not: "You think the world is a fine and decent place because that's what you are." This is what the British have been telling themselves, about themselves, for 800 years in bloody Ireland, and it's bilge. ■

cue

A Weekly Guide to En[illegible] and the Arts in New



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Bloody Business

Alec Baldwin stars as the scheming Scot in the Public Theater's *Macbeth* (page 77)

movies

Mean Streets...Otto Preminger...Funny Games

New Films

Afterglow—Two marriages hit the skids, and, seeking comfort, the unhappy spouses unknowingly swap partners. With Nick Nolte, Julie Christie, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Jonny Lee Miller. (1 hr. 53 mins.; R) *Regency.*

An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn—A British director named Alan Smithee (the pseudonym that directors use when they don't want their name on their movie) has no choice but to steal the only print of his Hollywood debut from the vile producers who have ruined it. With Ryan O'Neal, Eric Idle, Coolio, Chuck D., MC Lite, and Sandra Bernhard. (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Village East.*

★**The Apostle**—This is the best movie ever made about a man of God—which is to say, the most honest and morally the most ambiguous. Robert Duvall plays Sonny, a Texan Pentecostal preacher, and he's completely on top of what he's doing. One night Sonny has a vision: His wife (Farrah Fawcett, who is perfectly good) is sleeping with a handsome young minister. He returns home in a drunken rage, and, with half the town watching, takes a baseball bat to the minister's head. Sonny has to disappear fast, and after deep-sixing his car, he hits the road. He settles into a bedraggled but pleasant Louisiana town, where, identifying himself as "E.F., The Apostle," he joins forces with a retired black minister and builds a congregation from the ground up. The movie sags a bit as Duvall romances Miranda Richardson, who plays a genteel southern lady both attracted to and repelled by the dynamic preacher. Still, *The Apostle* gets at something authentic and challenging—the insistent goodness of a man never free of dishonesty or sin. Sonny is too much a sinner simply to possess God. He remains an eternal suppliant, a candidate for blessedness, and therefore, despite everything, a hero. (Denby; 1/12/98) (About 1 hr. 50 mins.; NR) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Pavilion Theatre.*

★**As Good As It Gets**—In James L. Brooks's new picture, Helen Hunt plays Carol, a straight-talking single mother obsessed with the care of her severely asthmatic young son. Carol falls into the one thing in the world that she needs least—a relationship with a matchlessly rude writer, Melvin (Jack Nicholson), who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder and torments his Manhattan neighbor, a gay artist (Greg Kinnear). But the movie, as we can tell early on, is a Scrooge story. The question is not when Melvin will melt but how. A superbly written and acted tearjerker. (Denby; 12/22–29/97) (2 hrs. 13 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; The Movies at Bayside.*

Ground Rules:

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by David Denby...A ★ denotes a current release that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element...Reviews are followed by the Manhattan theaters where the film is playing.

Opening
King Leery

In *The Man in the Iron Mask,* Leonardo DiCaprio is a lusty French king who drives his subjects to starvation and keeps his saintly twin brother locked in the Bastille. Enter Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, Gabriel Byrne, and Gérard Depardieu—aging (though still valiant) Musketeers who join forces one last time in an effort to switch the royal siblings and save the country. Opens Friday, March 13.

Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life—A documentary of the life and times of the best-selling author and objectivist philosopher. Written and directed by Michael Paxton; narrated by Sharon Gless. (2 hrs. 21 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

The Big Lebowski—See Denby, page 96. (1 hr. 57 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea West; Beekman; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside.*

The Borrowers—John Goodman stars in the film version of the famous series of books about a miniature family. (1 hr. 30 mins.; G) *Chelsea; 84th Street; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; The Movies at Bayside.*

Comrades, Almost a Love Story—The story of two loners from mainland China who chase their dreams and each other to Manhattan. Hong Kong's 1997 movie of the year. Starring Leon Lai and Maggie Cheung. Directed by Peter Chan. (1 hr. 45 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village 12th St.*

Dangerous Beauty—Katherine McCormack is a sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan who uses her brain to trade beauty for power. Also starring Rufus Sewell and Fred Ward. Directed by *thirtysomething*'s Marshall Herskovitz. (2 hrs.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Gemini; Lincoln Square.*

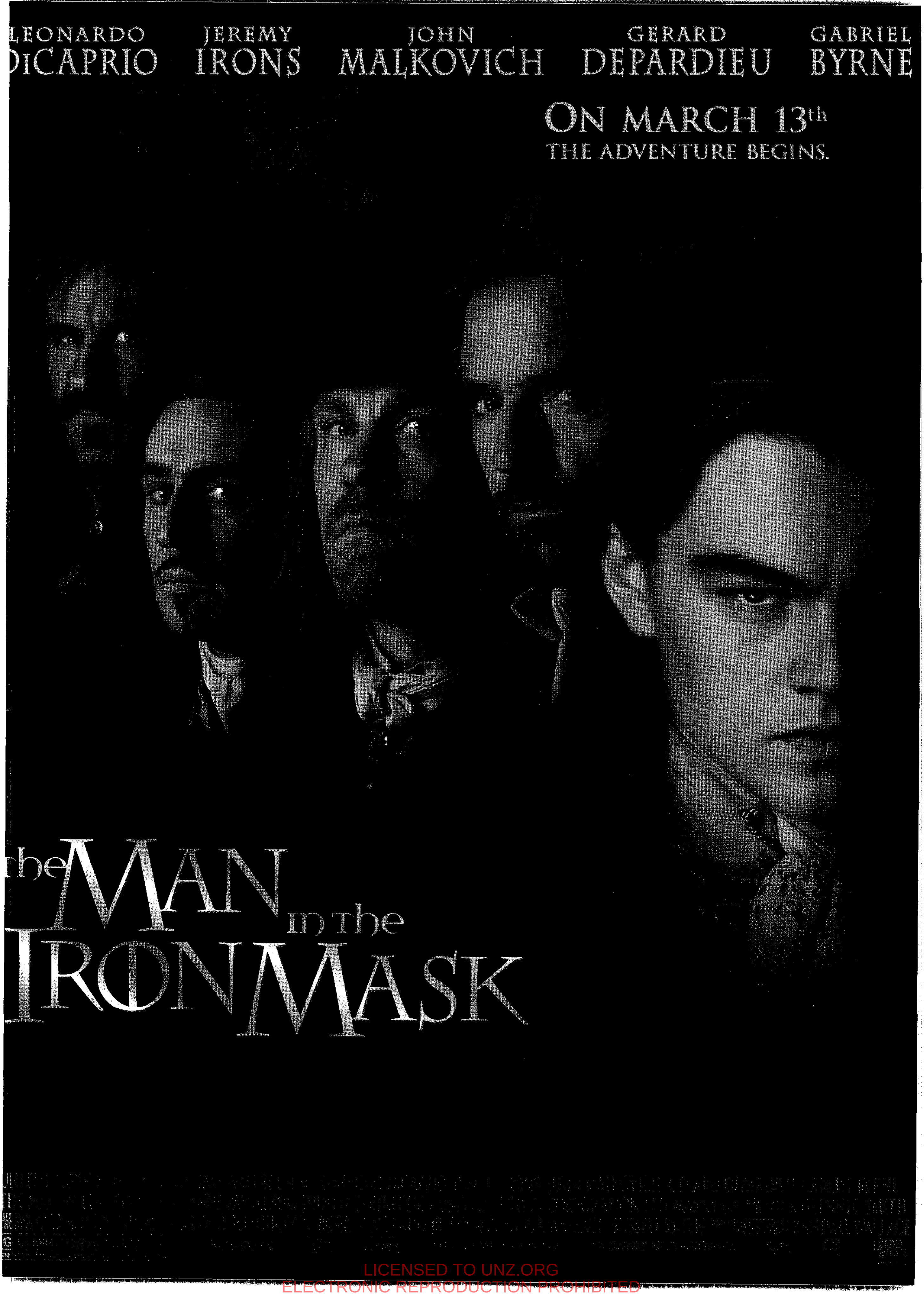
Dark City—A man discovers his memories aren't his own and fights to discover reality. With Kiefer Sutherland, Rufus Sewell, Jennifer Connelly, and William Hurt. Directed by Alex Proyas. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 19th Street East; Criterion Center; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Plaza.*

Deconstructing Harry—There are some excruciatingly funny moments in Woody Allen's new movie, but scandalously entertaining as parts of it are, the picture still left me in the foulest of foul moods. Ostensibly, it's about a selfish writer, Harry Block (Woody Allen), who travels to his alma mater in order to accept an honorary degree. Harry is at an impasse in both his creative and his personal life, and as he tries to get someone to accompany him on his trip, various women show up and tear into him—he has cheated on them, he has used their experiences with him in his novels and stories, he's a shit, a twerp, a betrayer, and so on. Woody Allen stages the fictional version of various marital events, drawn from Harry's books, and then he shows us the people that the fictions are based on—often very different from the originals. Harry may be an utter dog, but he attracts and disappoints one beautiful young woman after another. It's getting a little creepy to watch a short, pale 61-year-old man kissing (in one movie) Elisabeth Shue, Judy Davis, Hazelle Goodman, Amy Irving, Kirstie Alley, etc., etc. I have nothing against egocentricity, but Allen doesn't seem to realize that he's left the impression that women are drawn to Harry only because his creator is a famous movie director. (Denby; 12/29/97) (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *The Screening Room.*

Everest—The first-ever IMAX footage from Everest documents the 1996 summit climb of an international expedition. Directed by David Breashears and Ed Viesturs. (45 mins.; NR) *Lincoln Square.*

The Full Monty—Robert Carlyle stars as Gaz, an out-of-work steelworker in Sheffield, England, who rounds up his unemployed friends and persuades them to put together a male strip troupe. Directed by Peter Cattaneo. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Art Greenwich Twin; Sutton; Olympia Theatre.*

Illustration by Yishai Minkin.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JOHN MALKOVICH
GERARD DEPARDIEU
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ON MARCH 13th
THE ADVENTURE BEGINS.
the MAN in the IRON MASK

Funny Games—An Austrian thriller about a family whose vacation becomes a nightmare when a pair of clean-cut young men take them hostage. Written and directed by Michael Haneke. (1 hr. 43 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Film Forum.*

★**Good Will Hunting**—Mopping up at M.I.T., Will Hunting (Matt Damon) casually solves problems left on the blackboards, problems intended to stump the best mathematical minds in America. The formidable Professor Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgård), recognizing Will's uncanny talent, takes the boy under his wing, keeping him out of jail by agreeing to get him into therapy. Will lands in the office of Lambeau's old friend and rival Sean McGuire (Robin Williams), a bit of a screw-up himself but perhaps the one shrink in Boston who can understand Will. This movie has wit and temperament to burn—there isn't a dead scene in it anywhere. In the end, however, the script takes a disastrous turn toward conventionality. What I will always remember is an edge of temper. The film persuades us that genius is of incalculable worth but utter hell to live with. (Denby; 12/8/97) (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Chelsea West; Murray Hill Cinemas; New York Twin; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre.*

Great Expectations—A modern-day twist on the Dickens tale, with Ethan Hawke as a poor artist and fisherman whose mysterious benefactor sets him up as SoHo's newest hot talent. Gwyneth Paltrow is the pretty girl he's known and loved forever—though, given her pervasive unpleasantness, it's not clear why. Directed by Alfonso Cuaron. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *Ziegfeld.*

Hush—Gwyneth Paltrow goes to live with her new mother-in-law (Jessica Lange) and discovers she chose the wrong family to marry into. (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Village East; Chelsea; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Movieworld.*

Jackie Brown—Samuel L. Jackson plays Ordell Robbie, an egotistical L.A. gun seller. Ordell keeps a number of people in his employ, including a libidinous white surfer girl (Bridget Fonda); a mangy ex-con (Robert De Niro); and a stewardess, Jackie Brown (Pam Grier), who carries cash for Ordell back and forth between Los Angeles and Mexico. The movie is about Jackie's attempt to break free of Ordell and fleece him of his money. It's actually an elongated and ambitious B movie—a dogged homage to the kind of atmospheric minor crime picture that Tarantino, having grown up in a video store, enjoys more than he does prestige movies. He has built the movie around Pam Grier, but most of the time he pairs her with another B-movie actor, the somber, stone-faced Robert Forster. The plot is enormously complicated and never speeds up. At the climax, in fact, it slows down: Tarantino shows us the same sequence of events three times consecutively, each time from the point of view of a different character. After the formal bravura of *Pulp Fiction*, it's as if he were saying, "Look, no tricks; everything is exactly as it seems." So it may turn out that Quentin Tarantino is not, after all, the American Godard, not a mall-rat pop genius eager to transform pulp into formally demanding art. He really likes pulp for its stiff, repetitive, bullheaded qualities. He likes it so much, he's made his own sober version of it. (Denby; 1/5/98) (2 hrs. 34 mins.; R) *Embassy 2–3.*

Kissing a Fool—David Schwimmer has doubts about his fiancé's commitment so he asks his best friend to test her. With Bonnie Hunt, Jason Lee, and Mili Avital. Directed by Doug Ellin. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Waverly; Chelsea; Criterion Center; 86th Street; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Krippendorf's Tribe—Dr. James Krippendorf (Richard Dreyfuss) is an anthropologist who has to deliver a report to his university. Where's his proof? That is, where's the documentary evidence of the previously undiscovered New Guinea tribe that he claims to have stumbled across some years ago? The tribe, of course, doesn't exist. Krippendorf manufactures, in his suburban backyard, a film illustrating the habits of these remarkable people and the academic audience is fooled. His nemesis—Dr. Allen (Lily Tomlin)—discovered her own tribe some twenty years ago and doesn't believe him. And Jenna Elfman (playing a sycophantic anthropologist) comes on so hard she seems like a creep. Once it gets going, *Krippendorf's Tribe* is pretty damn funny—and at times uproarious—but there's no use pretending that the comedy is anything but disrespectful and crude. Thrown together without grace or beauty, the film falls below the level of satire—it's burlesque, really. (Denby; 3/9/98) (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) *19th Street East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Embassy 2–3; Lincoln Square; Movieworld.*

Retrospective

Anatomy of a Director

One of the truest independents, Otto Preminger produced and directed films on subject matter often well outside the mainstream (his 'Man With the Golden Arm,' made in 1955, was the first American movie about heroin addiction since the pre–Hays Code days). Starting Thursday, March 12, MOMA *opens its archives for "Produced and Directed by Otto Preminger," a collection of thirteen of his best-known films. (Above, 1954's 'River of No Return,' a western starring Marilyn Monroe.) See "Museums, Societies, Etc." for more info.*

Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

Kundun—Unlike the fatuous, conventional *Seven Years in Tibet,* this movie has been made with love. It has an assured beauty and an exquisite formality that honor the subject. And yet, lovely as it is, *Kundun* is of very little dramatic interest—it's an extremely beautiful, boring movie. A boy grows into a gracious and modest young man, a man not always sure that he's up to the role of leader; but still, he has no great spiritual crisis, no awful time of testing, and everyone in Lhasa gathers around and tutors and protects him. Approaching an alien tradition, Scorsese is entirely respectful, and the respectfulness dulls out the movie. I can't escape the feeling that Buddhism is an impossible subject for the movies. After all, great movie characters are men of overbearing will—Charles Foster Kane, or Vito and Michael Corleone, or Scorsese's Jake La Motta—not characters who renounce will. (Denby; 1/5/98) (1 hr. 53 mins.; PG) *Village East; Guild 50th Street.*

★**L.A. Confidential**—The best American movie of the year (thus far). Based on James Ellroy's 1990 novel about corruption and honor in the L.A.P.D., it's set in 1953 after the local Mafia boss has gone to prison. A crumb-bum named Sid Hudgens (Danny DeVito) is the publisher of a tabloid scandal sheet; he alerts the police to trivial forms of vice and then photographs for his magazine a celebrity cop, Jack Vincennes (Kevin Spacey), making the bust. A bullheaded cop, Bud White (Russell Crowe), is a man of abnormal rage and a tool of the seemingly benevolent but actually vicious chief of detectives, Dudley Smith (James Cromwell). Ed Exley, played by Guy Pearce, is a straight-arrow cop, all ambition and calculation. Exley is the natural enemy of Bud White, but they both slowly change: Russell Crowe comes up from brutalism, and Guy Pearce down from moralism, and they meet in the middle and join forces (to our relief). Kevin Spacey's Jack recovers his soul; so does the Veronica Lake look-alike played by Kim Basinger. This violent story truly earns its quiet, ambiguous final note of exhausted calm. (Denby; 9/29/97) (2 hrs. 17 mins.; R) *84th St.; New York Twin; Angelika; 19th St. East; 34th St. Showplace; Whitestone; Marboro; Bay Terrace; Main Street Cinemas; Atrium; The Movies at Staten Island.*

Leather Jacket Love Story—An erotic gay comedy about a love affair between a valley boy and a biker. Starring Sean Tataryn and Christopher Bradley. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

★**Live Flesh**—This is the best movie from Almodóvar since that Iberian screwball classic *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown.* The story, which has been freely adapted from a Ruth Rendell novel, teases symmetry into an Almodóvarian pretzel. Eager to become the world's greatest lover, our hero Victor (Liberto Rabal) sleeps with the wives of the two Madrid policemen who once put him in jail—first Clara (the great Angela Molina, of the tragic mask), who is much adored by her obsessive husband, Sancho (Pepe Sancho), then Elena (Francesca Neri), the woman who lured him into trouble some years earlier. It was at Elena's house that the 20-year-old Victor accidentally shot Sancho's partner, a promising young police detective named David (Javier Bardem). After the shooting, Elena, a rich girl dabbling in drugs, was so guilty over her own role in the affair that she married David, who is now confined to a wheelchair. He's a thoroughly virile man in every sense but the literal one. So the adulterous joining of Victor and Elena is charged with the many varieties of desire, guilt, and ambivalence. It's a scene worth waiting for—certainly the most sensual of Almodóvar's heterosexual love scenes. For Almodóvar, sexual passion is part of the cruel joke of Spanish guilt and fatalism. Sex is a matter of life and death that drives people into absurd situations; Almodóvar's most tragic scenes slide into farce (and vice versa). Despite his erotic fixations, Pedro Almodóvar is the cinema's last true innocent. (Denby; 1/26/98) (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Love and Death on Long Island—See Denby, page 96. (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Ma Vie en Rose—The incredibly appealing story of a little boy who thinks he's a little girl and the emotional upheavals this stubborn belief creates among his family and neighbors. Winner of a 1996 César award. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema; 62nd and Broadway.*

Men With Guns—On the eve of his retirement, a Latin American doctor sets off to visit the students he trained for village medicine and discovers the political persecution that lies beyond the city. Starring Federico Luppi, Mandy Patinkin, and Kathryn Grody. Directed by John Sayles. (2 hrs. 8 mins.;

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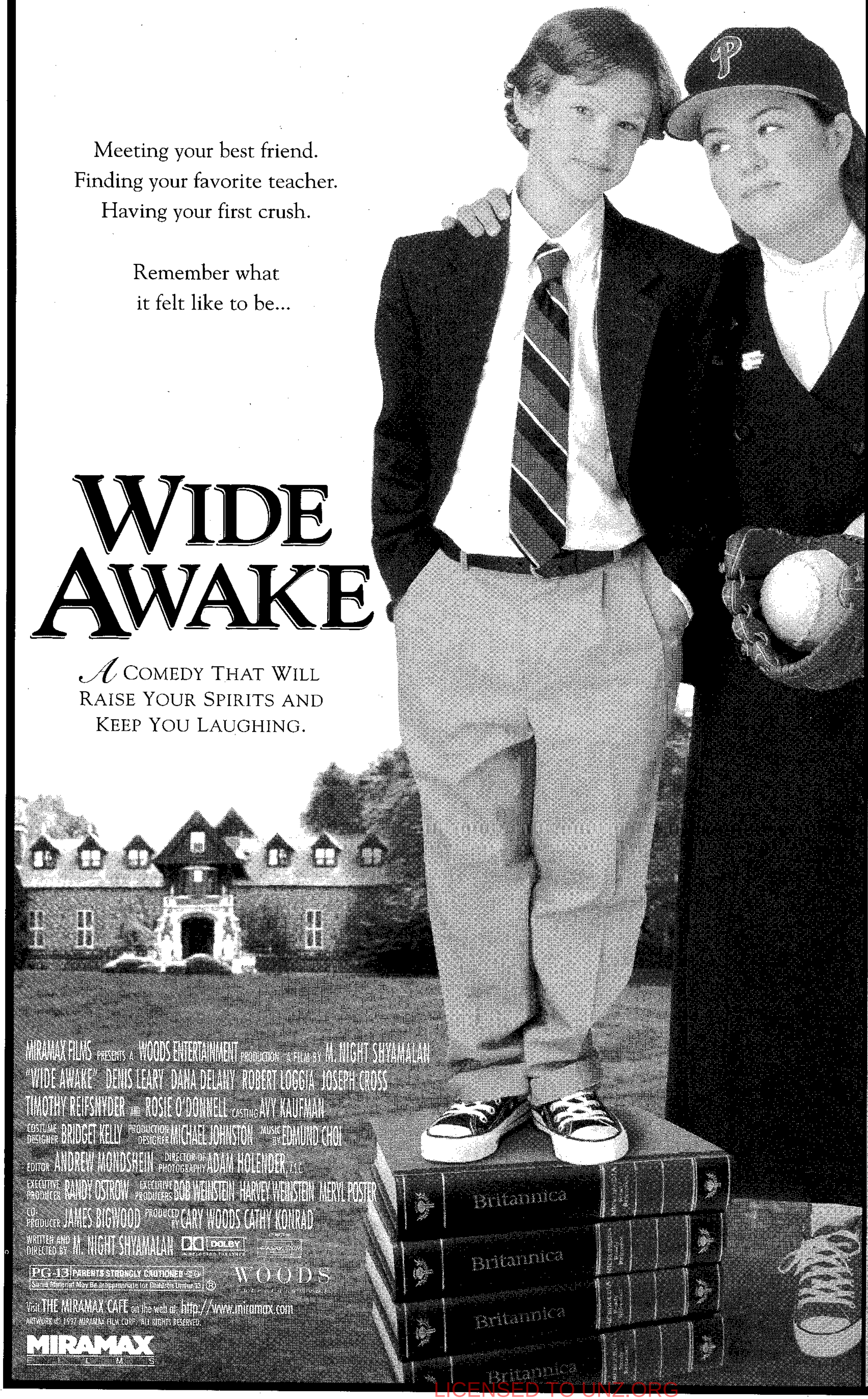
LEARY

DANA
DELANY

JOSEPH
CROSS

and ROSIE
O'DONNELL



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NR) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Moon Over Broadway—A documentary of the making of Carol Burnett's Broadway comedy *Moon Over Buffalo*. Created by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. (1 hr. 38 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

★**Mrs. Dalloway**—In this accomplished but slightly tedious adaptation of Virginia Woolf's great novel, Vanessa Redgrave is Clarissa Dalloway, a prosperous woman—married to a member of parliament—who is preparing for her annual party. In the hours before the party, Mrs. Dalloway reviews her life, casting back 30 years to easy summer days at her family's country estate, where, as a young woman, she rejected a demanding, puppyish suitor, Peter Walsh, in favor of the more stable and successful Richard Dalloway. Did she marry the right man? Redgrave makes the heroine all of a piece—timid, conventional, but alive to every breeze of consciousness. (Denby; 2/23/98) (1 hr. 37 mins.; PG-13) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Revival
Mob Mentality

Martin Scorsese's 'Mean Streets' returns for a twenty-fifth anniversary run, with Harvey Keitel as the guilt-ridden goodfella trying to keep friend Robert De Niro—and everybody else—from getting whacked. The New York gangland classic opens Friday, March 13, at Film Forum.

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman wrote and directed this story of the grim realities of today's working class in England. Starring Kathy Burke and Ray Winstone. (2 hrs. 8 mins.; R) *Village East.*

Palmetto—Palmetto is an unconvincing, paint-by-numbers pass at American *noir* by the usually ambitious German director Volker Schlöndorff (*The Tin Drum*). The components of the disaster include Schlöndorff's inability to get an adequate star performance out of an unfocused Woody Harrelson; his inducing Elisabeth Shue to caricature herself as a femme fatale who emits steam from every pore of her body; his arranging for characters to act stupidly in order to further the plot; and his attempt to excite the audience with such crudities as a vat of flesh-melting acid into which one character falls by accident. (Denby; 3/9/98) (2 hrs.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; 84th Street.*

A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies—A weeklong sneak preview of Scorsese's documentary, in which he reflects on film clips from the last 100 years of American cinema and tells how movies shaped his character and his work. To be released on video in April. (3 hrs. 46 mins.; NR) *Crown Gotham.*

Post Coitum—A successful French book editor with a husband and two children falls in love with another man and the downward spiral begins. Directed by Brigette Roüan. (1 hr. 37 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday.*

Rashomon—Akira Kurosawa's 1951 story of a rape, a murder, and the unknowability of truth in twelfth-century Kyoto. Starring Toshiro Mifune and Machiko Kyo. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

The Real Blonde—The writer-director Tom DiCillo had a great idea for a movie—a sexual roundelay set among young models and actors in New York. *The Real Blonde* undresses quite a few people, but the picture is so dully written and uncertainly directed that the audience is left wondering whether the stentorian clichés coming out of the characters' mouths are meant satirically or simply represent DiCillo's idea of how people talk. The audience can't possibly enjoy the sight of Matthew Modine floundering around as a failed actor who doesn't seem to know what he wants to do with himself. In such a case, empathy gives way to irritation. The other victims of DiCillo's miscalculations include Catherine Keener, Daryl Hannah, Maxwell Caulfield, Bridgette Wilson, and, as a hypocritical loudmouth agent, a stridently unfunny Kathleen Turner. (Denby; 3/9/98) (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) *Waverly; Chelsea; Coronet; Lincoln Square.*

Shampoo Horns—A night in the lives of a group of club kids. Starring Michael Alig. Directed by Manuel Toledano. (1 hr. 45 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

Sphere—At the end of *Sphere*, the three principals—Dustin Hoffman, Samuel L. Jackson, and Sharon Stone—agree, for the good of humanity, to forget everything that has happened to them in the movie up to that point. This is a pact I can only rush to join, and with exactly the same motive. There are some things that humankind is just better off not knowing about. (Denby; 3/2/98) (About 2 hrs.; R) *Village East; 59th Street East; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Pavilion Theatre.*

★**The Sweet Hereafter**—Atom Egoyan's film is a rarity. Adapted from Russell Banks's 1991 novel devoted to the aftermath of a devastating school-bus accident, the film appears to be a kind of detective story. A big-city lawyer, Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), enters a snowy, forlorn town in British Columbia after fourteen children have died and travels about interviewing the parents and survivors, desperate to enlist everyone, including the teenage survivor, Nicole (Sarah Polley), in a grievance suit. As Stephens investigates, we experience the accident through the eyes of Billy (Bruce Greenwood), who is driving behind the bus and is the father of two of the children. Billy sees; he's the hero of the movie, an unillusioned man, rejecting avenging lawyers and bad-luck omens in favor of the most bitter reality. His adulterous scenes with Alberta Watson have an acrid intimacy. The actors are all excellent in a plain style that avoids irony, pose, perversity. By the end of the movie, everything comes together—the answer to the detective inquiry is all that is most difficult to face in life. If there were many movies as reality-bound as this one, I think I would go mad. That this one exists, however, is almost a blessing. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Cinema Village 12th St; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

★**Titanic**—Writer-director James Cameron has pulled it off. This fabulously expensive watery epic is actually a very good movie. *Titanic* begins with a treasure hunter, Brock Lovett (Bill Paxton), who is obsessed with the sunken hulk. Lovett's submersible robot enters one of the deluxe staterooms to retrieve not the famous diamond he was looking for but only a drawing of a naked young woman wearing the stone. It turns out that the woman, Rose, is still alive; she's an articulate 100-year-old beauty (Gloria Stuart) who joins Lovett at his ship and then holds him and his crew of techno-ruffians in thrall with her story of what happened. Back in 1912, the 17-year-old Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) boards the ship in utter misery. Rose is accompanied by her awful fiancé, Cal Hockley (Billy Zane), a domineering steel-baron heir from Pittsburgh, and her snobbish mother (Frances Fisher). Onboard, Rose meets her soul mate, Jack Dawson (Leonardo DiCaprio). A gambler, Jack has the wit to see that Rose's unhappiness hides a bold, deeply romantic and sexual nature. Except for the crude, good-hearted Denver millionairess Molly Brown (Kathy Bates), the wealthy are unspeakably rude or just frightened and starchy. Jack, the interloper, takes Rose down to steerage, where the real people are having themselves a fine time drinking and dancing up a storm. This sort of cheesy stuff is redeemed only by the romantic charge between Winslet and DiCaprio. The sinking is lovely—detailed, agonizingly slow at first and then rushed and panicky and grandly gruesome at the end. As Jack and Rose hang at the railing, people lose their grip and go crashing down the deck or fall from the heights into the water. After the ship goes under, Cameron has his finest, cruelest moment—the survivors left in the vast expanse of freezing water wailing in confusion. As for Rose, she is delivered into an active and brilliant life. The ship may be ponderous, but Cameron's conception stays light in the water. (Denby; 12/29/97) (3 hrs. 17 mins.; PG-13) *Village Theatre VII; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; Astor Plaza; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Nova; Olympia Theatre; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; Plaza ; The Movies at Bayside.*

Twilight—Paul Newman is an aging private investigator who does a favor for an old friend (Gene Hackman) and gets caught up in a murder mystery. With Susan Sarandon and Stockard Channing. Directed by Robert Benton. (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; 72nd St. East; UA East; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

U.S. Marshalls—Tommy Lee Jones plays his tenacious character from *The Fugitive*, but this time he's chasing Wesley Snipes. (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Coronet; Criterion Center; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Nova; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Movieworld.*

★**Wag the Dog**—Barry Levinson's political and media satire goes as fast as the wind, and that's a relief because the idea behind the movie is thin. Very thin—and at times offensively glib. So if Levinson had directed with a heavy hand, or paused for more than an instant's reflection, he would have killed the nasty fun. It's less than two weeks before an election, and the president, seeking another term, is accused of molesting a teenage girl just outside the Oval Office. That the allegation may be false is not the point; the Washington *Post* is about to run the story. What to do? The president's operative Winifred Ames (Anne Heche) calls in a Dick Morris–like Mr. Fixit, Conrad Brean (Robert De Niro), and Brean, together with a big-deal Hollywood producer, Stanley Motss (Dustin Hoffman), distracts the press and the public. They whip up a nonexistent war with mighty Albania, complete with sinister Albanian terrorists crossing the Canadian border carrying a nuke in a suitcase. Now, satire doesn't have to be responsible, but it does have to be internally coherent, and this idea, however funny, is so extremely opportunistic—and at times so crassly conceived—that it falls into a variety of contradictions of its own making. (The script was written by David Mamet, who claims never to have read the novel—*American Hero*, by Larry Beinhart—that an earlier version of the screenplay was based on.) I have to say that *Wag the Dog* is accomplished and at times viciously funny. Levinson, shooting very fast and cheaply, creates a likable, low-key world of rogues and scoundrels working together to gull the public; we enjoy their company, we enjoy the pretense that political and media life is like this—fast, wisecracking, devastatingly effective. The picture conveys an irresistible pleasure in fakery for its own sake, and that's its charm. (Denby; 1/19/98) (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Sutton; Lincoln Square.*

Photograph from Film Forum.

★**The Wedding Singer**—In Sandler's new comedy (set in 1985), he's a suburban New Jersey entertainer at weddings and "functions," a charmer with long hair who makes eyes at aunts and uncles as he sings. On the side, he gives voice lessons to an old lady (Ellen Dow)—basically, he's a mild fellow who wants to get along and make his way in the world. He spends most of the film making eyes at Drew Barrymore, who plays a plump angelic blonde. It's a very pleasant movie but soft as a down quilt. Sandler's not only the life of the party; he's a part-time shrink, a peacemaker who brings people together. Of course, no one takes him very seriously. Why would anyone wed a man who sings at weddings? Will this schlumpy guy defeat an overconfident Wall Street type and win Drew Barrymore? Sandler is a gifted young man, but if he's going to become a big comedy star in the movies, he's got to either blow the place sky-high or find a more challenging turf. He makes comedy about the underside of blandness. In *The Wedding Singer,* the blandness threatens to take over. With Christine Taylor and Alexis Arquette. (Denby; 3/2/98) (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Criterion Center; 86th Street; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

★**The Wings of the Dove**—The movie differs from Henry James's novel in a hundred particulars, but the great point is that it works on its own terms, which is all one can ask. At the center, there are two young people who love each other but need money. Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter), clever, beautiful, and distinguished, lives in London with her wealthy aunt (Charlotte Rampling), who does what she can to break up Kate's relationship with the charming journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache). By degrees, and without his quite understanding it, Densher gets pulled into a conspiracy that Kate engineers. For there is another young person in their social circle, the fabulously wealthy American heiress Millie Theale (Alison Elliott), who is sweet and wasting away from some nameless disease. Millie needs a lover; she needs to live. Kate, who genuinely likes her, wants Millie to be happy and to know love—with Densher, who would then inherit the money, after Millie's death, that would allow Kate to marry him. The filmmakers have aggressively bumped the period ahead from 1902 to 1910; the characters smoke cigarettes furiously and attend a gallery exhibit of Klimt's decadent nudes. We get the point: Kate Croy and Merton Densher are modern personalities, rebels against the constrictions of their time. Rebellion is certainly not something that Henry James had in mind, but it's a minor vulgarization. (Denby; 11/10/97) (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Village East; First & 62nd St. Cinema.*

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

Angelika Film Center—18 W. Houston St. (995-2000) *Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; Gummo; Live Flesh; Love and Death on Long Island; Men With Guns; Mrs. Dalloway.*

Art Greenwich Twin—Greenwich Ave. at 12th St. (505-CINE#616) *L.A. Confidential; The Full Monty.*

Cinema Village 12th St—22 E. 12th St. (924-3363) *Comrades, Almost a Love Story; The Sweet Hereafter.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Film Forum—209 W. Houston St. (727-8110) *A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America; Funny Games; Mean Streets; Moon Over Broadway; Rashomon.*

Quad Cinema—34 W. 13th St. (255-8800) *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life; Leather Jacket Love Story; Ma Vie en Rose; Shampoo Horns.*

The Screening Room—54 Varick St. (below Canal) (334-2100) *Deconstructing Harry; The City of Lost Children.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village East—189 Second Ave., at 12th St. (529-6799) *An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn; As Good As It Gets; Hush; Kundun; Mrs. Brown; Nil by Mouth; Senseless; Sphere; The Wedding Singer; The Wings of the Dove.*

Village Theatre VII—66 Third Ave., at 11th St. (982-0400) *The Apostle; The Big Lebowski; Dark City; Palmetto; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; Wag the Dog.*

Waverly—323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (505-CINE#603) *Kissing a Fool; The Real Blonde.*

14th–41st Streets

19th Street East—890 Broadway, at 19th St. (260-8000) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

34th Street Showplace—238 E. 34th St. (532-5544) *L.A. Confidential; Titanic; Twilight.*

Chelsea—260 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#597) *The Apostle; The Borrowers; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Palmetto; The Real Blonde; Titanic; Twilight.*

Chelsea West—333 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#614) *The Big Lebowski; Good Will Hunting.*

Murray Hill Cinemas—160 E. 34th St. (689-6548) *As Good As It Gets; Good Will Hunting; Hush; U.S. Marshalls.*

42nd–60th Streets

59th Street East—239 E. 59th St. (505-CINE#615) *Sphere.*

Astor Plaza—44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (869-8340) *Titanic.*

Cinema I, II, Third Ave.—1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (753-6022) *Krippendorf's Tribe; Love and Death on Long Island; The Wedding Singer.*

Coronet—993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (505-CINE#608) *The Real Blonde; U.S. Marshalls.*

Criterion Center—1514 Broadway, bet. 44th and 45th Sts. (354-0900) *As Good As It Gets; Caught*

Opening
Tourist Trap

In the deeply disturbing *Funny Games,* a family enjoying a lakeside vacation is captured and tortured by two men in tennis whites. The well-dressed psychopaths make frequent asides to the camera—part of Austrian director Michael Haneke's strategy to challenge the ease with which movie audiences consume violence. Opens Friday, March 13, at Film Forum.

Photograph from Film Forum.

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Up; Dark City; Hush; Kissing a Fool; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.

Crown Gotham—969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (759-2262) *A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies.*

Eastside Playhouse—919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (755-3020) "Israel Film Festival." (See "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Embassy 1—1560 Broadway, bet. 46th and 47th Sts. (302-0494) *Senseless.*

Embassy 2–3—701 Seventh Ave., bet. 47th and 48th Sts. (730-7262) *Jackie Brown; Krippendorf's Tribe; Scream 2.*

Guild 50th Street—33 W. 50th St. (757-2406) *Kundun.*

Paris Theatre—4 W. 58th St. (688-3800) "Views of Merchant Ivory." (See "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

State—1540 Broadway (391-2900) *The Big Lebowski; Good Will Hunting; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Twilight.*

Sutton—205 E. 57th St. (759-1411) *The Full Monty; Wag the Dog.*

Worldwide Cinemas—340 W. 50th St. (505-CINE#610) *Anastasia; Boogie Nights; For Richer or Poorer; The Ice Storm; Kiss the Girls; The Rainmaker; Tomorrow Never Dies.*

Ziegfeld—141 W. 54th St. (505-CINE#602) *Great Expectations.*

61st Street and Above, East Side

72nd St. East—1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (879-1313) *Twilight.*

86th Street—125 E. 86th St. (505-CINE#604) *Kissing a Fool; The Wedding Singer.*

86th Street East—210 E. 86th St. (249-1144) *Closed for Renovations.*

Beekman—1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (505-CINE#606) *The Big Lebowski.*

First & 62nd St. Cinema—400 E. 62nd St. (505-CINE#957) *The Apostle; Dark City; Kissing a Fool; Titanic; The Wings of the Dove.*

Gemini—1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (832-1670) *As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Hush.*

New York Twin—1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (744-7339) *L.A. Confidential; Good Will Hunting.*

Orpheum 7—1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (828-9738) *As Good As It Gets; The Big Lebowski; Caught Up; Dark City; Hush; Sphere; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

UA East—1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (249-5100) *Twilight.*

61st Street and Above, West Side

62nd and Broadway—1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (505-CINE#864) *Ma Vie en Rose.*

84th Street—2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (877-3600) *L.A. Confidential; The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Dark City; Palmetto; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls.*

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas—30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (757-2280) *The Apostle; Live Flesh; Love and Death on Long Island; Men With Guns; Mrs. Dalloway; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Lincoln Square—1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (336-5000) *As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Real Blonde; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; Wag the Dog; The Wedding Singer.* IMAX: *L5–First City in Space; Everest; Across the Sea of Time; Into the Deep; Four Million House Guests.*

Metro Cinema—2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (505-CINE#609) *Kissing a Fool; Twilight.*

New Coliseum—701 W. 181st St. (740-1545) *Dark City; Sphere; U.S. Marshalls.*

Nova—3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (862-5728) *Senseless; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Olympia Theatre—2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (505-CINE#613) *The Full Monty; Titanic.*

Regency—1987 Broadway, bet. 67th and 68th Sts. (505-CINE#585) *Afterglow.*

Bronx

Area Code 718

Bay Plaza—2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (320-3020) *The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Hush; Kissing a Fool; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls.*

Concourse Plaza—214 E. 161th St. (588-8800) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Hush; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Whitestone—2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (409-9037) *L.A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Hush; Kissing a Fool; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Brooklyn

Area Code 718

Alpine—6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (777-FILM#580) *The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Krippendorf's Tribe; Titanic; Twilight.*

Canarsie—9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (251-0700) *Caught Up; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Cobble Hill—265 Court St. (596-9113) *The Big Lebowski; Hush; Sphere; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

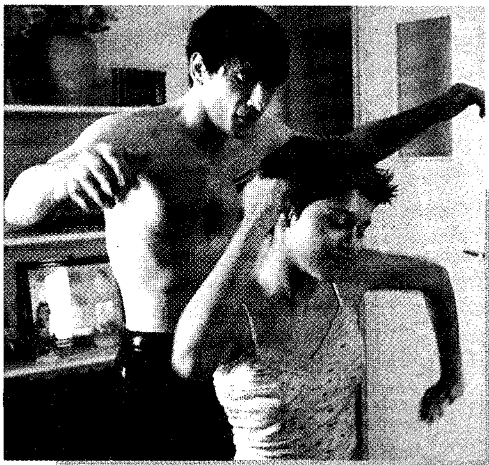
Fortway—6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (777-FILM#578) *Dark City; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls; The Wings of the Dove.*

Kenmore—Church Ave. nr. Flatbush Ave. (777-FILM#576) *Caught Up; Dark City; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls.*

Kent Triplex—Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (338-3371) *Caught Up; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Kings Plaza—5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (777-FILM#579) *Caught Up; Dark City; Hush; Krippendorf's Tribe; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls.*

Kingsway—946 Kings Hwy. at Coney Island Ave. (777-FILM#577) *As Good As It Gets; The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers;*



Photograph courtesy of the Film Society of Lincoln Center.

Data

Breaking a Wave

Many American film critics are feeling invigorated by recent French cinema—some going so far as to label the latest releases the *next* New Wave. Something is clearly afoot: Young talent and modest budgets have produced some of the most intriguing films in years. In 1997, Paris movie houses saw works by new female directors (like Sylvie Verheyde, making her debut with *A Brother*, above); features with street cred and multi-culti casting (Jean-François Richet's *Ma 6-T Va Crack-er*); and storylines heavy with regional flavor (like Robert Guédiguian's *Marius et Jeannette*, a love story set in blue-collar Marseilles). But is France's traditional fare of sexual entanglement, farce, and melodrama really gone for good? Or has it just been modernized? Below, a quick inspection of some of the imports screening this week at Lincoln Center's "Rendez-vous With French Cinema Today" (see "Museums, Societies, Etc." for more info). **PATRICIA FALVO**

MOVIE	NOUVEAU PLOTLINE	OLD-ÉCOLE CONCEIT
THE BET	Two men vow to quit smoking to prove who's the manliest. After manic bouts of eating and exercise—plus a stint in an anti-tobacco cult—they become obese and lose their wives.	Smoking as inalienable right.
MA 6-T VA CRACK-ER (Rough translation: "My Housing Project's Going to Explode")	Ultra-violent teenage guys dressed in hip-hop clothes live in public housing, use slang, disrespect women, and steal cars.	Celebration of social anarchy and Marxism.
SEVENTH HEAVEN	Melancholy Parisian housewife can't enjoy sex with her husband. A psychiatrist hypnotizes her over lunch and tells her to rearrange the bedroom furniture. Voilà!	Sex and therapy.
DRY CLEANING	Bored middle-aged dry-cleaners spice up their marriage by attending a traveling brother-and-sister drag show. They balk at having a foursome, but decide to invite the bisexual brother to move in with them.	Sex and cross-dressing.
GENEALOGIES OF A CRIME	Catherine Deneuve is a psychiatrist who suspects that her young nephew has homicidal tendencies. She's right: He murders her. Deneuve, though, reappears as a new character, the boy's lawyer. The two become lovers, and she loses her mind.	Catherine Deneuve. And love-induced madness.

Kissing a Fool; Titanic; Twilight; The Wedding Singer.

Marboro—6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (232-4000) *L.A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Replacement Killers.*

Pavilion Theatre—188 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn (369-0838) *The Apostle; The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Hush; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Ridgewood—55–27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (821-5993) *Dark City; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

The Movies at Sheepshead Bay—3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (615-1700) *As Good As It Gets; The Big Lebowski; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Queens

Area Code 718

Astoria—28–60 Steinway St. (726-1279) *Caught Up; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Bay Terrace—211–01 26th Ave. and Bell Blvd., Bayside (428-4040) *L.A. Confidential; The Apostle; The Big Lebowski; Good Will Hunting; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Centre Sunnyside—42-17 Queens Blvd. (361-6869) *The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Dark City; Hush; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Cinema City—183–15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (777-FILM#592) *As Good As It Gets; Dark City; Hush; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls.*

Cinemart—106–03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (261-2244) *Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Titanic; Twilight; The Wedding Singer.*

Continental—70–20 Austin St., Forest Hills (544-1020) *Good Will Hunting; Kissing a Fool; U.S. Marshalls.*

Crossbay—94–11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (848-1738) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Senseless; U.S. Marshalls.*

Crossbay II—92–10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (641-5330) *The Big Lebowski; Dark City; Hush; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Replacement Killers; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Elmwood—57–02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (429-4770) *As Good As It Gets; Krippendorf's Tribe; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Forest Hills—107–16 Continental Ave., at Queens Blvd. (261-7866) *Dangerous Beauty; Hush.*

Fresh Meadows—Eastbound Service Road, at 190th St. (777-FILM#619) *The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Kissing a Fool; Sphere; Titanic; Twilight; The Wedding Singer.*

Jackson Triplex—82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (478-6777) *Dark City; Titanic; U.S. Marshalls.*

Main Street Cinemas—72-66 Main St. (263-4828) *L.A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Kissing a Fool; Titanic; Twilight.*

Midway—108–22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (261-8572) *Closed for renovations.*

Movieworld—242–02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (423-7200) *Hush; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Senseless; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

North Shore Towers—27–10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (229-7702) *The Apostle; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Plaza —103–14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (639-0012) *Dark City; Titanic.*

The Movies at Bayside—38–39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (225-7711) *As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Kissing a Fool; Titanic; Twilight.*

Trylon—98–81 Queens Blvd., at 66th Ave., Rego Park (459-8944) *The Big Lebowski.*

Staten Island

Area Code 718

Atrium—680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (317-8300) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Krippendorf's Tribe; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Hylan Plaza—107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (351-0805) *The Apostle; Senseless; Titanic; Twilight; The Wedding Singer.*

The Movies at Staten Island—141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (983-9600) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Big Lebowski; The Borrowers; Dangerous Beauty; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Senseless; Titanic; Twilight; U.S. Marshalls; The Wedding Singer.*

Museums, Societies, Etc.

American Museum of the Moving Image—"Young and Restless: A Richard Linklater Retrospective." 3/14: *Dazed and Confused* (1993) and *Suburbia* (1996). 3/15: Preview screening of *The Newton Boys* (1998) with Richard Linklater. 36-01 35th Ave., Astoria, Queens (718-784-0077); $12–$15 nonmembers; $8–$10 members; $4 ages 5–18.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Uncommon and Untraditional: Women and Media." 3/14: *The Female Offender* (1995) and *A Woman's Face* (1941). 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000, ext. 230); $6; $4 for members, students, and senior citizens.

Cinema Village 12th St—"Dennis Nyback Presents." 3/16: Stag Party Special, including *How to Undress in Front of Your Husband* (1940). Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363). $8.

Different Light—3/15: *A Star Is Born* (1954). 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850); free.

Donnell Media Center—"Featuring . . . Erich von Stroheim." 3/11: *Foolish Wives* (1922). 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619); free.

Eastside Playhouse—Through 3/12: "Fifty Years of Israeli Cinema." 919 Third Avenue (532-2075). Tickets $8.75.

Film Society of Lincoln Center—(The Walter Reade Theater)—"Rendezvous With French Cinema Today." 3/13–3/14: *The Bet* (1997) and *Marius et Jeannette* (1997). 3/13–3/15: *The Chambermaid on the Titanic* (1997). 3/15 and 3/17: *What's So Funny About Me* (1997) and *Ma 6-T Va Crack-er* (1997). 3/15 and 3/19: *Genealogies of a Crime* (1997). "Music for the Movies: Toru Takemitsu." 3/10–3/12: *Antonio Gaudi* (1985). 3/10: *Ran* (1985) and *The Ceremony* (1971). 3/11–3/12: *Kwaidan* (1964). "Independents Night." 3/12: *Brother Tied* (1997). Call 875-5601 for info. 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600); $8.50.

French Institute—3/10: *Le Magique* (1996). "Cinéma & Francophonie." 3/17: *L'Oeuvre au Noir* (1988) and *Joyeuz Calvaire* (1996). Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160); $7, $10 double feature.

Harlem Film Festival—3/13-3/14: "Harlem Film Festival: Visions of New Black Filmmakers." Aaron Davis Hall, West 135th St. and Convent Ave. (650-7148). Tickets $8 adults; $5 children.

Israel Film Festival—Through 3/12: "Fifty Years of Israeli Cinema." Eastside Playhouse, 919 Third Avenue (532-2075). Tickets $8.75.

Japan Society—"Literature to Film." 3/13: *A Dedicated Life* (1994). 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015); $7.50.

Museum of Modern Art—"From the Archives: Otto Preminger." 3/12 and 3/15: *Exodus* (1960) and *Skidoo* (1968). 3/13: *River of No Return* (1954) and *The Moon Is Blue* (1953). 3/14: *Saint Joan* (1957) and *Bonjour Tristesse* (1957). 3/16: *In Harm's Way* (1964). "Special Screenings." 3/10: *Sierra de Teruel* (1939). "National Film Registry." 3/13: *Primary* (1960), *Dog Star Man* (1964), and *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957). 3/14: *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957) and *The Band Wagon* (1953). "Big as Life: An American History of 8mm Films." 3/12: *Intimate Worlds 6: Sexuality and Identity*. "Who the Devil Made It?" 3/13: *The Dirty Dozen* (1967). 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9400); free with $9.50 admission.

Paris Theatre—"Views of Merchant Ivory: 3 Continents, 14 Films." 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800). Adults $8.50; seniors and children, $5.

Symphony Space—"The Envelope Please: 50 Years of Foreign Film and the Academy Awards." 3/10: *Cinema Paradiso* (1989) and *Day for Night* (1973). 3/17: *La Strada* (1954) and *Tristana* (1970). 2537 Broadway, at 96th St. (864-5400); $8, $5 members.

The Screening Room—Sunday brunch: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). 54 Varick St., below Canal St. (334-2100); $8 ($5 for Sunday brunch patrons).

YWCA Cine-Club—"A Celebration of Japanese Cinema." 3/14–3/15: *Stray Dog* (1949). 610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (735-9717); $5 members, $6 nonmembers.

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Broadway

Previews and Openings

Ah, Wilderness!—Lincoln Center presents Eugene O'Neill's charming—and only—comedy, which the playwright described as "a capture of a mood, an evocation [of] the spirit of a time that is dead now with all its ideals and manners and codes." Debra Monk, Craig T. Nelson, and Sam Trammell star; Daniel Sullivan directs. $45–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/18 opening. *Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

Cabaret—*Wilkommen!* Sam Mendes directs a revival of this eight-Tony-fabulous musical by Kander and Ebb. Natasha Richardson plays Sally Bowles; Alan Cumming plays the grinning emcee. Ron Rifkin and Mary Louise Wilson also star. $50–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Cabaret, bar, and banquette seating available. In previews for a 3/19 opening. *Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. (719-1300).*

The Deep Blue Sea—Edward Herrmann and Blythe Danner, both of whom appeared on Broadway years ago in *The Philadelphia Story,* reunite for this Terence Rattigan drama about a woman who leaves her husband for a younger, less responsible man. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. In previews for a 3/26 opening. *Roundabout Theatre Company Stage Right, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

The Sound of Music—Returns to Broadway for the first time since its 1959 premiere. Hum along; bring the kids. Rebecca Luker, who played a memorable Magnolia in *Show Boat,* plays the nun turned governess, and Michael Siberry plays the widower captain. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 3/12 opening. *Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Now Playing

Art—Three male friendships unravel because of an expensive painting. *(Ars longa, amicitia brevis).* Written by Yasmina Reza; Alan Alda, Alfred Molina, and Victor Garber star. $45–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 3/1/98. *Royale Theatre, 242 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Beauty and the Beast—A musical based on a movie based on a fairy tale. Setting box-office and, presumably, merchandising records even as we speak. Deborah Gibson plays the girl; Chuck Wagner plays the (hairy) boy. Lyrics by Tim Rice and Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. $22.50–$70. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 4/18/94. *Palace Theatre, 1564 Broadway, at 47th St. (307-4100).*

Bring In 'Da Noise, Bring In 'Da Funk—George C. Wolfe and Savion Glover's Tony-winning history of African Americans as told through tap dancing, poetry, and song. $20–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. (239-6200).*

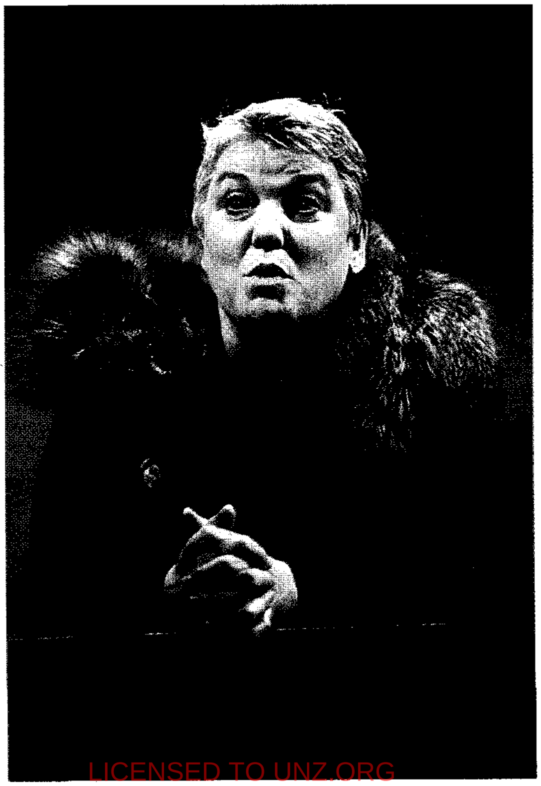
The Capeman—Paul Simon's painstakingly crafted and vigorously ballyhooed new musical finally arrives. The score—a mix of salsa, rock, doo-wop, and gospel tunes—features more than 30 songs; the story, based on one of the most sensational double murders in New York history, follows Salvador Agron, the perp, for more than 30 years of his uncommon life, as he metamorphoses from gang tough to jailhouse poet. Book by Derek Walcott, direction by Mark Morris, and star turns by Ruben Blades and Marc Anthony. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 1/29/98. *Marquis Theater, 211 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

Cats—Now and for the foreseeable future. By Andrew Lloyd Webber, of course, with an assist from T. S. Eliot. $37.50–$65. Mon. and Tues. at 8, Wed. at 2 and 8, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/7/82. *Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Opening

Saints and Sinners

Tyne Daly, the powerhouse actress who nearly out-Etheled Ethel Merman in the 1989 revival of *Gypsy,* gets the stage all to herself in *Mystery School,* the latest site-specific production from En Garde Arts and Long Wharf Theatre. This time, the space is the gorgeous Angel Orensanz Center, the oldest surviving synagogue in Manhattan, and the theme, appropriately, is spirituality. Through portraits of five female characters—an academic, a recovering alcoholic, a Christian fundamentalist, an archaeologist's widow, and a cable-access talk-show host—Daly shows how adaptive human beings, not to mention fine actresses, can be. Opens March 11 at 7 P.M.



Photograph by T. Charles Erickson.

Chicago—It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of *Chicago* to Broadway, but since *Chicago* is about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Especially when, as here, it pays off. Bebe Neuwirth does a scissors kick or two while maintaining her come-hither brand of snootiness; minimalism prevails. If Chicago in the twenties was like this, it was more fun than Periclean Athens. Also starring Marilu Henner, Hinton Battle, and Ernie Sabella. (Simon: 12/2/96.) $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/14/96. *Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman, the electrifying teen cutie from *Beautiful Girls,* stars in this newly adapted version of the 1955 play. Also starring Linda Lavin, Harris Yulin, George Hearn, and Austin Pendleton. $40–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/4/97. *Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Freak—The mambo energies of John Leguizamo are on thrilling display in this, his newest one-man show about a misspent and unholy adolescence. Horror stories about masturbation, the Fresh Air Fund, and his evil grandmother abound. $17.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Cort Theatre, 138 W. 48th St. (239-6200).*

Jekyll & Hyde—Man turns into beastly man, all in the name of science. Book and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, music by Frank Wildhorn. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/28/97. *Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St.(239-6200).*

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—This romantic comedy, set in 1939 Atlanta on the eve of the premiere of *Gone With the Wind,* is Alfred Uhry's first effort since *Driving Miss Daisy.* The wait clearly paid off; he won the 1997 Tony award for Best Play. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 2/27/97. *Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (307-4100).*

Les Misérables—The implacable Inspector Javert hounding the innocent ex-convict Jean Valjean; the pathetic Fantine, wronged by the entire world, dying as she entrusts her daughter, Cosette, to the now-prosperous Mayor Valjean; the dastardly Thénardiers bringing up Cosette as a scullion while cosseting their own daughter, Eponine—what a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) $15–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 3 hrs. 15 mins.*

The Life—A contemporary street opera set in eighties Times Square. Lillias White and Chuck Cooper just picked up Tony awards for their performances. Music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Ira Gasman; book by Coleman, Gasman, and David Newman. $40–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 4/26/97. *Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St.(239-6200).*

The Lion King—This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical.* Kiddies will delightedly swallow it whole, unless they are tiny and flappable. But this is the one such show adults will feast on, too, mostly because of the wonders wrought by Julie Taymor, who designed and directed this cornucopia of daz-

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where half-price tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

zlements. Puppetry from East and West is put to superlative use, yet the actors, singers, and dancers are accorded enough humanity to ply their anthropomorphic skills. And Taymor has found ways to transmute the strictly cartoonish bravura of the big-screen Lion King onto a stage so that nothing is lost in translation. (Simon: 12/1/97). $20–$80. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened 11/13/97. *New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Miss Saigon—This reworking of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly,* set in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, is now one of Broadway's ten longest-running musicals. Music by Claude-Michel Schonberg; lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr.; directed by Nicholas Hytner. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/11/91. *Broadway Theater, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (239-6200).*

The Old Neighborhood—Three interconnected one-act plays by David Mamet, starring Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Mary McCann, and Jack Willis. Directed by Scott Zigler. $45–$55. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 11/19/97. *Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Paul McKenna's Hypnotic World—Under the spell of this British hypnotist, audience members ride imaginary horses, perform rock anthems, channel Martians, and otherwise humiliate themselves. $35. Mon. at 8 and Sun. at 7. *Roundabout Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (307-4100).*

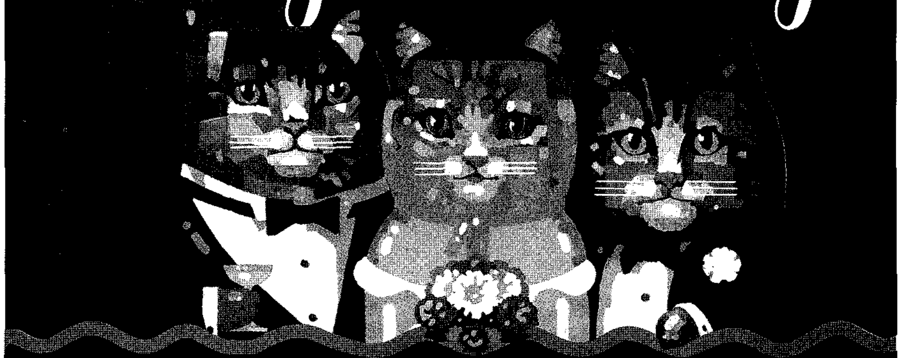
The Phantom of the Opera—Nine leads, ten years, $357 million, and almost 7 million theatergoers later, Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Ragtime—A musical based on E. L. Doctorow's historical novel, with a book by Terrence McNally and music by the composer-lyricist team of Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens. The epic, neatly trimmed and tidied for the stage, braids the fates of three fictitious families—one black, one Jewish, one Wasp—and an assortment of historical characters. $31–$125. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/18/97. *Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. $30–$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.*

The Scarlet Pimpernel—You've seen the billboard. Now come see the show. It's got romance, suspense, swashbuckling, and a whole bunch of eighteenth-century stuff; if it succeeds, Broadway could well be on its way to becoming a French Revolution theme park. Pop composer Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde*) did the score. Nan Knighton adapted Baroness Orczy's novel for the stage. Christine Andreas, Terrence Mann, and Douglas Sills star. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/9/97. *Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

1776—The book of this 1969 musical, the gifted Peter Stone's masterpiece, is surely one of the best ever. Thrillingly incorporating the potentially divisive issue of slavery, it succeeds in keeping us, despite our knowledge of the outcome, in a state of wonderfully paradoxical suspense. Splendid as was Peter Hunt's original production, this Scott Ellis revival very nearly matches it. It will provide you



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Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—They say the neon lights are bright on Broadway, and when this show—drawn from the songbook Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote to accompany the American baby-boomer childhood experience—breezes into New York City, people gonna scrape and bow. A tip, tip, tip, young blood: Buy yourself a ticket, sit down in the very first row. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. $65–$75. *At the Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (239-6200)?* Uh-huh. *2 hrs. 10 mins.*

The Sunshine Boys—This Neil Simon play is a triumph of strategy. (1) It is full of one-liners: easily detachable and portable laughs. (2) The main characters, a retired vaudeville team, now hate each other, hence ever-popular insult comedy. (3) Willie Clark and Al Lewis are also Jewish, so we get audience-tickling Jewish jokes. (4) The background is show business, providing cherished showbiz humor. (5) A play about old croakers will capture Broadway's senescent regulars. (6) Big Apple–vs.–New Jersey jests draw in the trans-Hudsonians. (7) As ex-vaudevillians, Willie and Al generate nostalgia for a vanished world. Add the stage-screen-and-TV-enshrined duo of Jack Klugman (Willie) and Tony Randall (Al), and it's platinum-edged-securities time. This production at the National Actors Theatre revival is rattling good fun. (Simon: 1/5/98.) $30–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/8/97. *Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Titanic—What it lacks in suspense it makes up for in Tony awards (five, in 1997, including Best Musical). Music and lyrics by Maury Yeston; book by Peter Stone. Directed by Richard Jones. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/23/97. *Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (307-4100).*

Opening

Dead Woman Walking

After Timothy McVeigh's conviction, Ted Kaczynski's confession, and the Texas execution of a born-again Christian, the public may not be very eager to spend more time thinking about the death penalty. But Blue Light Theater Company's production of 'Amazing Grace,' a drama about a murderer awaiting her execution, could well be worth looking at because Michael Cristofer, Pulitzer-winning author of the 'The Shadow Box,' wrote the script and Marsha Mason plays the condemned. Opens March 15 at Theatre Four.

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Amazing Grace—Marsha Mason stars as a condemned murderer awaiting her execution. Written by Pulitzer Prize–winner Michael Cristofer (*The Shadow Box*); presented by Blue Light Theater Company. $37.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/15 opening at 7. *Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. (239-6200).*

Checking Out—A ghost and a downhearted Puerto Rican have an otherworldly encounter in the Bronx. Written by Candido Tirado. $20. English performances on Wed.–Fri. at 8; Spanish performances on Sat. at 2 and 8 and Sun. at 2 and 6:30. Previews begin 3/11 for a 3/19 opening. *Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. (354-1293).*

Dinah Was—A play (with some music) about Dinah Washington, Queen of the Blues. Yvette Freeman (*ER, Working*) plays the diva; Oliver Goldstick wrote the script. $35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Previews begin 3/11 for a 3/24 opening. *WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. (206-0523).*

Dress to Kill—Eddie Izzard, Britain's hottest, cross-dressingest comic, comes to the West Village to share. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8:30. Previews begin 3/10 for a 3/26 opening. *Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. (307-7171).*

Hot Klezmer—A brief (and tuneful) history of Klezmer. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. $37.50. Schedule varies. In previews for a 3/19 opening. *Raymond J. Greenwald Theatre, 307 E. 26th St. (633-9797).*

Long Day's Journey into Night—This O'Neill drama opens at a perfect time, considering that its sunnier, funnier analogue, *Ah, Wilderness!,* is playing just up the street at Lincoln Center. Brian Murray and two-time Tony Award winner Frances Sternhagen star; Charlotte Moore, as always, directs. $30–$35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Previews begin 3/13 for a 3/22 opening at 7. *Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (727-2737).*

Macbeth—Is that a dagger Alec Baldwin sees before him? Or is it Angela Bassett, sharpening her nails? Or George C. Wolfe, shouting stage directions? $40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. In previews for a 3/15 opening. *The Public Theater's Martinson Hall, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200).*

Mystery School—Tyne Daly plays five women, all of whom hunger for a rich spiritual life. Written by Paul Selig; presented by En Garde Arts and Long Wharf Theatre. $32.50–$35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 3/11 opening. *Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St. (239-6200).*

Side Man—Warren Leight, the son of an itinerant trumpet player, wrote this drama as a means of both reproaching and honoring his father, whose never-ending quest for big-band work left the family untended for long stretches at a time. Michael Mayer directs, fresh from his acclaimed revival of *A View From the Bridge.* $20. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 5. In previews for a 3/11 opening. *Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (279-4200).*

St. Nicholas—Brian Cox, a happy mainstay of the British and American stage, plays a vicious Dublin theater critic who falls in love. Written and directed by Conor McPherson. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 3/11 for a 3/17 opening. *Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. (333-4052).*

Now Playing

As Bees in Honey Drown—Socialite Alexa Vere de Vere—one part Hepburn, two parts eyeliner, three parts luxury addict—enlists a young author to write a screenplay about her life. Written by Douglas Carter Beane; alertly directed by Mark Brokaw (*How I Learned to Drive*). Starring Bo Foxworth and J. Smith-Cameron. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 7/24/97. *Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (239-6200).*

BAFO (Best and Final Offer)—A dark comedy about the havoc downsizing wreaks on the white male psyche. Written by Tom Strelich; directed by Robert Kalfin. $37.50 Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. Opened 3/8/98. *American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—Martin McDonagh, the Anglo-Irish playwright with the precociously long résumé, makes his American debut with this drama about an old woman's attempts to sabotage her daughter's love life. The play was one of four by McDonagh (now all of 27) to run simultaneously in London last season. $35–$40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. Through 4/19. *Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (239-6200).*

Benita Canova—Struck by Balthus's erotic depictions of little girls, Richard Foreman responded with this, his own metaphysical portrait of sex and violence among the nubile. $15. Tues. and Thurs.–Sun. at 8. Through 4/5. *Ontological Theatre at St. Marks, 131 10th St. (533-4650).*

Black Humor—Lewis Black peddles his brand of shrewd, informed political comedy without, amazingly, invoking Bill Clinton's weakness for Big Macs or Al Gore's resemblance to plywood. $30–$35. Tues—Fri. at 8, Sat. at 8 and 10:30, and Sun. at 7. Through 3/29. *Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (239-6200).*

Blue Man Group: Tubes—Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Wildly inventive, and appropriate for just about everyone—kids, adults, foreigners, haters and lovers of performance art. $39–$49. Tues., Wed., Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. *Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (254-4370).*

The Broadway Kids Sing Broadway—A musical revue of songs made famous by Broadway kids. Expect tunes from *Annie, The Sound of Music, Oliver!,* and *Bye Bye Birdie.* $20. Sat. and Sun. at noon. John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).

Eyes for Consuela—Under Terry Kinney's highly kinetic direction, this new Sam Shepard play is as adhesive as a burr, as headstrong as a burro, and as savory as a burrito. Where else would we encounter a Mexican bandit with a double family life—one on each side of the Rio Grande—who indulges in sociophilosophical dialectics with his captive gringo? As the two men made kin by marital problems, David Strathairn (Henry) is as splendid as usual, and Daniel Faraldo (Amado), new to me, a wonderful surprise. (Simon: 3/2/98.) $35. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Fantasticks—The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. *Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (674-3838).*

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin, who proved himself a first-class interpreter of French farce in the Roundabout production of *Scapin* two years ago, now brings his directorial energies to bear on this 1907 Feydeau comedy about the misadventures of a suspicious wife. Mark Linn-Baker, last seen on his way to the forum, stars. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. *Roundabout's Laura Pels Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Some titles say it all, and Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof poking fun at the assorted absurdities of the Great White Way couldn't arrive in town at a more—well, let's be kind and say propitious time. $40–$45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8:15, Sat. at 2:30 and 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30; food and drink available/optional. *Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (239-6200).*

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—An audience-participation comedy akin to *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding,* written by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack. When Grandma Sylvia dies, a power struggle ensues among family members. $37.50–$57.50, which includes a mitzvah meal. Opened: 10/9/94. Wed.

Photograph by Scott Suchman.

at 2 and 7:30, Thurs. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 1 and 5. *Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (691-1555).*

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde—From letters, biographies, and court transcripts, writer-director Moisés Kaufman has put together an absorbing show about Oscar Wilde's 1895 trial for "gross indecency with male persons." $20–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 6/5/97. *Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane (307-4100).*

Hazelwood Jr. High—A new girl arrives at her midwestern junior high, comes between two lesbian lovers, and suffers a tabloid-perfect fate. In the hands of a less capable theater company, this tale—based on actual events!—would probably be lurid and junky; in the hands of the very fine New Group (and Chloë Sevigny, an anti-ingenue if ever there was one), this site-specific production should be all that and more. $15–$30. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 4 and 8. Opened 3/5/98. *Intermediate School 70, 333 W. 17th St. (279-4200).*

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell—actor, director, and founding member of the Drama Dept.—wrote and stars in this rock concert–cum–musical, in which a German war bride finds herself in a Kansas trailer park and achieves self-actualization, not to mention tabloid fame, through songwriting. Featuring Stephen Trask and his downtown band, Cheater. $35. Mon at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. Opened 2/14/98. *Jane Street Theatre at the Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. (239-6200).*

How I Learned to Drive—Paula Vogel's play benefits from an original slant: child molestation as an act of consenting partners, with the child as a willing participant. Miss Vogel has written a memory play about a pedophile and his big-breasted niece by marriage, Uncle Peck and Li'l Bit, names a trifle too apt to ring true. The driving lessons Uncle Peck gives Li'l Bit over the years are a slow, careful—even caring—seduction. Mark Brokaw has directed inventively. (Simon: 3/31/97). Now starring Deirdre Lovejoy and Cotter Smith. $45–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 3/16/97. *Century Theater, 111 E. 15 St. (239-6200).*

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—An irrepressible, technicolor celebration of puns, fabric, and gay life. Its costumer and musical "conceiver," Howard Crabtree, died in June of 1996, just days after completing the revue. $45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2 and 5. *Douglas Fairbanks Theater, 432 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love—has bravely decided to buck the trend. $47.50–$50. Mon. and Tues at 8, Wed. at 2:30 and 8, Fri at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

I Will Come Back—A new musical celebrating Judy Garland's life. Written and directed by Timothy Gray, an associate of the diva; starring Tommy Femia, a cabaret performer who's made a healthy living out of impersonating her. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. (239-6200).*

Joseph Gabriel Magic—Magician Joseph Gabriel mixes sleights of hand with large-scale illusions. $25–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (239-6200).*

June Moon—The Drama Dept. revives this Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman comedy about a Tin Pan Alley songwriter who falls for a big-city sophisticate. Directed by Mark Nelson. $20–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/15/97. *Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (239-6200).*

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school-teaching nun backed by a magisterium of unassailable moral authority and some mean wrist action with a ruler. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 5. *St. Luke's Church Annex, 308 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Maiden's Prayer—A new comedy from Nicky Silver *(Pterodactyls, Raised in Captivity)* about five adults interconnected through blood, friendship, marriage, and less meaningful unions. Starring Joanna Going, Patricia Clarkson, Daniel Jenkins, Geoffrey Naufts and Christopher C. Fuller.$35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. (353-3874).*

Mindgames—Marc Salem, a mentalist and former director of research for *Sesame Street*, does a slew of fancy math tricks, stops his own pulse, and predicts the contents of people's wallets. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2, 7, and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 11/17/97. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

Mizlansky/Zilinsky or "Schmucks"—A new comedy from John Robin Baitz about a pair of Hollywood hustlers' last-ditch effort to seal a deal. Nathan Lane, fresh from Hollywood, where he evaded mice and other vermin, plays one of the two title schmucks; Joe Mantello, the talented young actor who directed Neil Simon's *Proposals*, directs. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Never the Sinner—The sensational story of Leopold and Loeb—two wealthy, well-educated teenagers who in 1924 murdered a young boy on a whim—moves from the American Jewish Theatre, where it played to great acclaim earlier this season, to a home further uptown. $25–$45. Mon. at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

Perfect Crime—Warren Manzi's long-running thriller about a wealthy psychiatrist accused of murdering her husband, and the small-town detective who tries to prove she committed the "perfect crime." $35. Mon. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/5/87. *Duffy Theatre, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. (695-3401).*

Pride's Crossing—One of our subtlest playwrights (Tina Howe) and one of our most incisive performers (Cherry Jones) have combined talents to give us this delicate, minor-key memory play. It rehearses the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow from 10 to 90 in seemingly random order, the way reality and remembrance play hopscotch with each other. Mabel is a quirky, headstrong, despotic nonagenarian, a New England matriarch whose high point was being the first woman to swim the English Channel the harder way, from England to France. Cherry Jones has to be seen to be believed—if then. Without aid from makeup, she roams fast and free across the decades, embodying all ages and conditions through the sheer power of acting. (Simon: 12/22/97.) $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 4/5. *Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

R & J—A four-man, prop-free version of *Romeo and Juliet* that will likely stand out among the tragedy's many newfangled interpretations. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220)..*

Richard II and Richard III—Are presented in rotating repertory by the always estimable Theater for a New Audience. A company of eighteen actors plays 60 roles; Ron Daniels directs. $37.50 per *Richard*. Schedule varies. *Through 4/5. Playhouse at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. (279-4200).*

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—There is a decent amount of merriment to be had from this revue. Inspired—or incited—by a homonymous travel guide, this show by a number of hands pokes fun at every aspect of travel, from the hopeless phone calls for airline reservations to the joys of sandy Uzbekistan, from Hertz to other hurts and frustrations. Nothing is overlooked, though some things are a mite undercooked. Even the Ca*th*tilian li*th*p ge*th* a tuneful *th*ong tribute. (Simon: 12/15/97.) $42.50–$47.50; optional dinner one hour before curtain. Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599).*

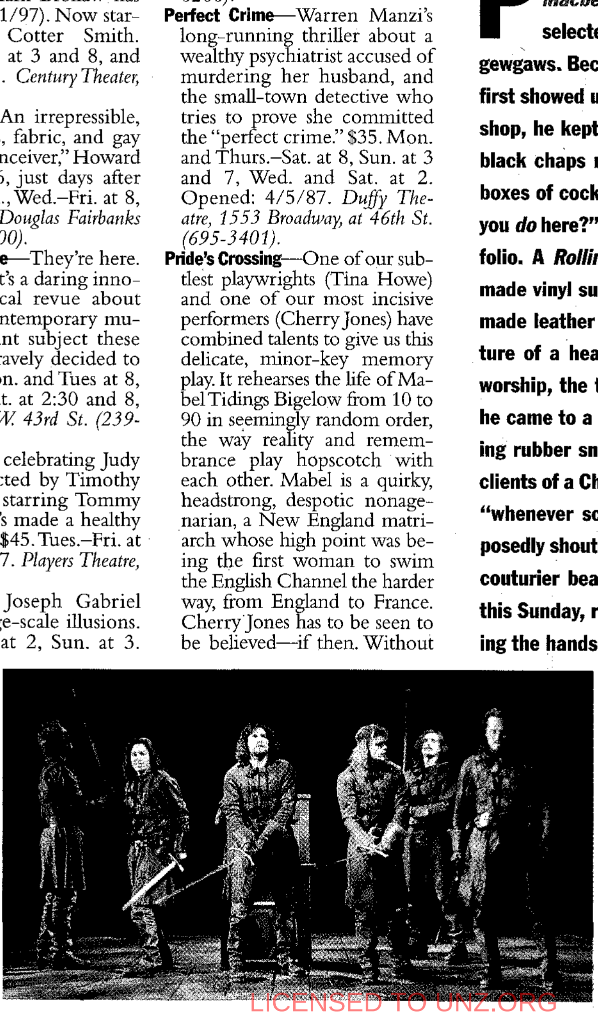
Shopping and Fucking—And how these two pursuits intersect in the lives of five young Londoners. By Mark Ravenhill. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and

Opening

Out, Damned Spike!

Perhaps Toni-Leslie James, the costume designer for *Macbeth*, forgot to warn her cast that the tailor she'd selected was also a specialist in bondagewear and S&M gewgaws. Because when Alec Baldwin, who plays the title role, first showed up at David Samuel Menkes's Fifth Avenue leather shop, he kept staring warily at his surroundings. The racks of black chaps must have confused him, not to mention all the boxes of cock-and-ball-restraint bags. "What is it exactly that you *do* here?" the actor finally asked. Menkes slid him his portfolio. A *Rolling Stone* cover with Ginger Spice in a Menkes-made vinyl suit. An ad for Absolut Kurant featuring a Menkes-made leather corset. Baldwin paused when he came to a picture of a head harness with shoe brush attached—for boot worship, the tailor gently explained—and paused again when he came to a photo of a black sack with pink ears and matching rubber snout. A pig hood, the tailor said, for the naughty clients of a Chicago dominatrix. "From then on," says Menkes, "whenever something went wrong during rehearsal, he supposedly shouted, 'Shine my boots, you pig!' " The bespectacled couturier beams. When the Public Theater production opens this Sunday, roughly a dozen members of the company, including the handsome and neurotic Liev Schreiber (as Banquo and Seyton), will be buckled up in Menkes's fine leather raiment. There's nothing particularly suggestive, let alone wicked, about any of his costumes, but Menkes says he appreciated the vacation from spikes, harnesses, and cruelly placed rings. "I spend 52 weeks per year looking at black leather," he adds. "This time at least it was brown."

JENNIFER SENIOR



Photograph by Michal Daniel.

Performance
Radio Days

Would that we could keep him there: On March 16, Matthew Broderick returns to the New York stage for a onetime reading of *The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man,* Arthur Miller's first radio play. A sit-down interview with Miller, conducted by Charlie Rose, follows the performance, and a swank supper party at Top of the Times follows that. All proceeds go to the Signature Theatre Company, which is currently hosting a season of the playwright's work. For tickets ($100–$400) and more information, call 967-1913. The benefit begins promptly at 7 P.M. at the New Victory Theatre.

10, Sun. at 3. *New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (460-5475).*

Stomp—As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show in which a troupe of performers dances, claps, and generally bangs on everything in sight. Featuring buckets, brooms, trash-can lids, and, yes, the kitchen sink. $24.50–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 2/27/94. *Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., bet. 7th and 8th Sts. (477-2477).*

Tallulah's Party—Tovah Feldshuh stars in a musical about the celebrity's life—and who's more Tallulah than Tovah? Music by Arthur Siegel, lyrics by Mae Richard, book by Bob Griffiths. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 6. *Homefront Theatre, 236 W. 54th St. (581-5866).*

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding—A wedding at *St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St.*, then a reception at *Vinnie's, 147 Waverly Pl.*, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $65–$75. Tues.–Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88. *(239-6200).*

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt, a pair of talented pianists who never made it to the recital halls, wax philosophical about pushy parents and smug concert judges. $40–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Opened 10/30/97. *Promenade Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (239-6200).*

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach, who made his Broadway debut more than a half-century ago, stars in this new comedy about a relationship between a young man and an older Jewish widower. $35–$45. Written by Jeff Baron; directed by Lonny Price. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. *Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (505-0700).*

Jacobs *continued from page 33*

weight, crushing the ground-level storefronts. Architects and engineers say this is a very common situation for buildings of this era.

"We're just working through every building built in New York in that time period," says Melvin. "There are no movement joints whatsoever in the buildings. The concrete frames shrink, crushing the brick on the outside and disconnecting the wedge anchors that hold the brick shelves on the side of the building. And then they had the problem where they didn't have enough anchors in anyway. Every one that I've opened up has had too few anchors." So if you look carefully at any glazed-brick building surrounded by a sidewalk shed—and there are plenty of them—you will see bulging spots, cracks, and, occasionally, sections of the siding pulling away from the façade.

Here's an unsettling idea: Besides the fact that a shoddy construction job or a poorly thought-out design can sit quietly for decades and then one day, like a volcano, erupt, our knowledge about the design and construction of buildings isn't cumulative. We don't exactly learn from our mistakes, because the technology keeps changing.

Buildings, especially in the postwar era, especially signature skyscrapers, are experiments, one-offs. While the brick-and-tie method of building is positively anachronistic—Colonial architecture in the sky—more technologically assertive methods of building design and construction are also problematic. Signature buildings of every decade have pushed the envelope of engineering knowledge and construction techniques, and the most elaborate designs can be undone by very small things. As the space-shuttle *Challenger* explosion could be pinned on faulty O-rings, problems with big glass office towers can often be attributed to sealants. Glass office towers, mighty statements of corporate and architectural power, have to be caulked, like bathtubs, or they'll leak.

"It's the archenemy, water," says Kaese.

"Water is the single most destructive thing, even sitting there doing nothing, just being water," adds architect Page Ayres Cowley of the Cowley Duenow Partnership.

Water proved to be the undoing of one of New York's most significant architectural landmarks. Lever House, the 1953 Skidmore, Owings and Merrill building, began the city's romance with the glass-curtain wall. "The architects' design was to make it almost a prism, so that it almost floats," notes Alex Herrera, director of preservation at the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission. "They designed it with the best technology they had available at the time."

Unfortunately, while the building has gleaming stainless steel framing the glass on the exterior, the steel inside, the lattice that actually supports the glass, was not stainless. And because the sealants, made of a linseed-oil-based putty—state-of-the-art, 1953—failed, the steel structure of the curtain wall rusted. The rust caused the steel to expand, dislodging or breaking many of the building's glass panels. For years, maintenance crews replaced glass panels whenever they broke. SOM has devised a plan to rescue Lever House that involves re-skinning the whole building and replacing the rusty steel with stainless.

The architects and engineers who inspect façades for structural flaws are like the oncologists of the building trades, telling us things we don't really want to hear. Kaese, who is currently finishing up the restoration of the Whitney Museum's façade, mentions a trait of the World Trade Center's that is less overtly frightening but still unnerving: "If you sit on the east side in the morning when the sun hits the building," she says, "you can hear the whole thing pop. You can hear the movement of the structure."

She then points out that this is true of any building "if it's quiet enough." Buildings, like people, harbor little idiosyncrasies and pathologies that occasionally cause them to behave destructively, dumping a ton of bricks onto Madison Avenue during peak holiday-shopping season, say, or caving in on 42nd Street just as New Year's Eve approaches. And rainy spells bring out the worst in buildings. This winter's parade of northeasters has turned some masonry façades into cottage cheese.

Friedman, for his part, is marginally reassuring. "Nothing collapses," he says, "until a lot of things are wrong simultaneously. It takes a lot for brick to actually start falling off a building."

And if that is not comforting enough, Friedman adds that a building on the verge of collapse will likely issue some sort of warning. "Before everything falls down, there are a lot of ugly noises," he says. "There'll be a rain of mortar before the bricks themselves actually start falling out, so it's like, 'Why am I getting pelted by sand?' That would be your first reaction."

And your second reaction? What should you do if you're walking down the street and you feel a trickle of sand falling on your head?

Friedman, the structural engineer, offers a pragmatic answer: "Run." ■

Photograph by Melinda Sue Gordon/Columbia Pictures.

art

Berenice Abbott...Joan Snyder

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Stuart Arends—Small-scale minimal paintings on boxlike supports; through 3/28. Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (734-3600).

Judith Cotton—Recent paintings that depict rowers in boats, alone and in groups; 3/12–4/11. Graham, 1014 Madison Ave. (535-5767).

Jean Fautrier—Paintings that depict still life and nudes set in a looming color space, by this seminal French artist (1898–1964) whose works were admired by Mark Rothko; through 4/11. Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (988-1623).

Sam Francis—Biomorphic abstract paintings produced early in the artist's career, 1959–61, when he was preoccupied almost exclusively with the exploration of blue; through 3/31. Gray, 1018 Madison Ave. (472-8787).

Giambologna—Bronze, terra-cotta, and marble sculptures by the Mannerist sculptor (1529–1608) who worked in Florence for the Medici family, from the collection of Michael Hall; through 4/4. Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (879-6606).

Adolph Gottlieb—A selection of the artist's pictographs of the forties and early fifties from the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation; 3/12–4/4. Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (794-0550).

Sherry Kerlin—Oil and ink drawings based on photographs; through 4/11. Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St. (327-2526).

Peter Schroth—Intimate landscape views in oil on wood; through 3/28. Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. (861-7338).

Hedda Sterne—A selection of abstract paintings and drawings from 1960 to the present; through 3/28. CDS, 76 E. 79th St. (772-9555).

57th Street Area

Leigh Behnke—Recent paintings and watercolors that depict multiple and repetitive images of landscape, cityscape, still life, and interior views; through 3/28. Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (759-2345).

Theresa Bernstein—A survey of figurative paintings by this 108-year-old artist who was a member of the Philadelphia Ten, a group of women artists that formed in 1917 in response to the male-dominated Eight, later called the Ashcan School; through 4/18. Whalen, 24 W. 57th St. (397-9700).

Johan Creten/Robert Greene—Terra-cotta torsos covered with ceramic roses/New paintings of landscapes populated with metaphorical dogs and people. Through 3/28. Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (980-5454).

Mary Frank—Triptych paintings that evoke the religious panels of the Middle Ages; through 4/4. Moore, 724 Fifth Ave. (247-2111).

Kathryn Freeman—Paintings of allegorical interiors with figures; through 3/31. Tatischeff, 50 W. 57th St. (664-0907).

Andrew Gellatly—Abstract paintings in oil and ink that suggest atmospheric occurrences and vast distances; through 4/1. McGrath, 20 W. 57th St. (956-3366).

Ground Rules:

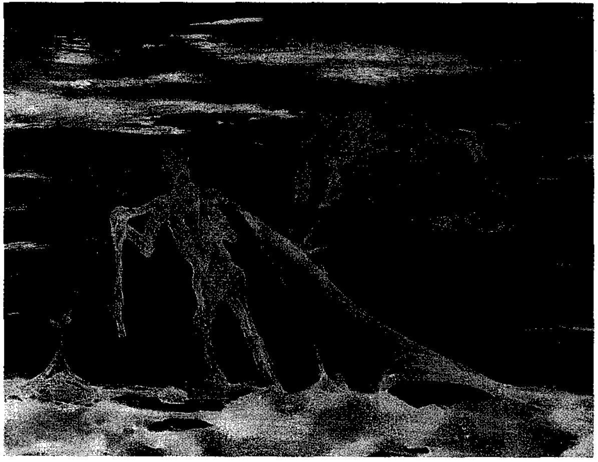
Galleries are generally open Tues. through Sat. from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

Morris Graves—Paintings that depict emblematic images of the moon, serpents, birds, and vessels; through 3/28. Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. (888-1122).

Donald Judd—Early fabricated works; through 3/21. Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (421-3292).

Photography Occupied

Sought by German police during World War II because he was Jewish, Czech Surrealist Jindrich Heisler spent five years hiding in his friend Toyen's bathroom in Prague, where he managed to produce an astonishing body of photographs, among them a series of works created by stretching glue on a glass-plate negative, a technique known as colle étirée. At Ubu Gallery, 16 East 78th Street; through April 4.



Photograph by J. Hyde, courtesy of the Ubu Gallery.

George Segal—Pastel and charcoal portraits of the sculptor's family and friends and studies of beef hanging in Manhattan's meat market; through 4/4. Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (586-0110).

Anne Truitt—Recent sculptures; through 3/21. Danese, 41 E. 57th St. (223-2227).

Paul Waldman—Recent paintings of figures in reductive landscapes; through 3/28. Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (245-2888).

Helen Miranda Wilson—New paintings that depict the sky from the perspective of looking upward; through 4/9. McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (319-1996).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Nancy Arlen—Cast-glass sculptures from the seventies and early eighties; through 4/2. Algus, 25 Thompson St. (966-1758).

Michael Ashkin/Charlie White—New sculpture and photographs/A magazine pictorial installation titled *Dominatrix* that depicts the adventures of a she-demon. Through 3/21. Rosen, 130 Prince St. (941-0203).

Jill Baroff—An installation in which the grid pattern on the gallery's cement floor has been carved into its walls; through 3/21. Stark, 113 Crosby St. (925-4484).

Jeremy Blake/Enoc Perez—A collection of scripted drawings on the hallucinatory exploits of a demented director-writer-producer/Portraits of people in the artist's life. Through 3/14. Bronwyn Keenan, 3 Crosby St. (431-5083).

Howard Buchwald/Gregory Raymond Halili—Oil paintings from the seventies and acrylic paintings from the past four years/Miniature gouache paintings of patterned fabrics and landscapes; 3/14–4/15. Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway (966-6676).

Diana Cooper/Anissa Mack—Obsessive doodle paintings/The artist's version of the Great Cardiff Giant, a twelve-foot-tall, 2,000-pound petrified man first unearthed and exhibited in 1869. Through 3/21. Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (941-5711).

Herman de Vries—An installation, works on paper, and artists' books; through 3/28. Inglett, 100 Wooster St. (343-0573).

Ellen Gallagher—New paintings that incorporate a vocabulary of marks and symbols; through 4/11. Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (228-2828).

Cheryl Goldsleger—Large multi-panel geometric paintings; through 3/21. Rosenberg + Kaufman, 115 Wooster St. (431-4838).

Jane Hammond/Radcliffe Bailey—Works on paper/Assemblages. Through 3/21. Beitzel, 102 Prince St. (219-2863).

Gillian Jagger—A monumental sculpture installation of stones and other objects from nature that has at its center a deer carcass the artist found on the road in upstate New York and then cast in clear resin; through 3/28. Kind, 136 Greene St. (925-1200).

Karlo Kacharava—Expressionistic drawings and paintings by this Georgian artist and art critic (1964–1994) who brought together Moscow and Tbilisi artistic circles; through 4/4. Goldstein, 39 Wooster St. (431-0314).

Jenifer Kobylarz—New paintings that depict motifs of spinelike organic forms; through 4/4. Thorp, 103 Prince St. (431-6880).

Barry Le Va/Lawrence Beck—Works on paper covering the years 1967 through 1998/Photographic works. Through 3/21. Sonnabend, 420 W. Broadway (966-6160).

Christopher Lucas—Videos, sculptures, and paintings; through 3/28. McIntyre, 45 Crosby St. (334-9666).

Feng Mengbo—Paintings, CD-ROMS, and collages by a Beijing artist; through 3/21. Solomon, 172 Mercer St. (941-5777).

John L. Moore—Paintings of ellipsoid shapes hovering in color fields; through 4/4. M-13, 72 Greene St. (925-3007).

Matt Mullican—Forty-three paintings generated from the taxonomy of a nineteenth-century encyclopedia, and a video and recent multiples; through 3/28. Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (925-4338).

Elizabeth Olbert—Painted freestanding objects and wall-mounted pieces that take New England as their focus; through 4/4. Golden, 39 Wooster St. (274-0080).

Christy Rupp/Franz Vana—An installation, titled *Dirty Work*, of metal, glass, and paper sculptures of viruses and bacteria clusters that attack the human body/Photographs. Through 3/21. TZ'Art, 28 Wooster St. (966-9059).

Bonell Silverman—Canvases that combine elements of expressionism and color-field painting, by a Houston-based artist; through 3/21. Steele, 420 W. (941-8388).

Rudolph Steiner—Blackboard drawings that were the visual component to Steiner's lectures given between 1919 and 1924; through 3/21. Blum, 99 Wooster St. (343-0441).

Stephen Pace—Abstract paintings from the fifties; through 4/8. Perlow, 560 Broadway (941-1220).

Rubén Torres-Llorca—Sculptures of rocking chairs, ladders, wooden houses, animals, and parts of the body; 3/14–4/25. Knowlton, 568 Broadway (966-2093).

Richard Tuttle—New mixed-media wall pieces that continue the artist's investigation of the perceptive and cognitive boundaries of the visual field; through 3/21. Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (431-3685).

Brian Wall—Recent abstract steel sculptures; through 4/25. Lowinsky, 578 Broadway (226-5440).

Chelsea

Vito Acconci—Three new installations that were first made in 1974-75; through 4/1. Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. (206-9300).

René Pierre Alain/Inka Essenhigh—Paintings made from pigmented plaster/Paintings of cartoonlike biomorphic creatures. Through 3/21. Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (352-1600).

Ricci Albenda—Word paintings on aluminum panels; through 4/4. Kreps, 529 W. 20th St. (761-8849).

Matthew Benedict—Works in gouache on paper, embroideries, and stencil works; through 4/25. Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. (367-7474).

Renée Cox—Large-scale color photographs of the artist as a comic-strip character; through 3/28. Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. (206-0297).

Robert Grosvenor/John McLaughlin—A new large-scale sculpture that refers to architecture and vernacular building, and related works on paper/A selection of paintings by the West Coast abstractionist (1898–1976). Through 3/21. Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. (255-1105).

Charlie Hewitt—New sculpture and mixed-media works on paper and canvas; through 4/5. Kempner, 501 W. 23rd St. (206-6872).

Pello Irazu—Wall paintings, drawings, three-dimensional objects, sound, and sculpture that explore the tension between private and public domains; through 3/21. Weber, 529 W. 20th St. (691-5711).

Alain Kirili—Three sculptures from the artist's ongoing *Commandments* series; through 3/28. Marlborough Chelsea, 211 W. 19th St. (463-8634).

Joseph Logan—Paintings of meticulously rendered patterns that evoke sixties design; through 3/28. Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. (243-5937).

Sharon Louden—Gestural drawings; through 4/4. Anderson, 453 W. 17th St. (463-0970).

Lovett/Codagnone—Recent collaborative photographs; through 4/12. XL, 504 W. 22nd St. (462-4111).

Alice Neel/August Sander—Paintings from the fifties through the seventies that depict men in suits and have not been previously exhibited/Photographs of businessmen, entrepreneurs, and industrialists from the twenties and thirties. Through 4/25. Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. (242-7727).

David Nelson—Sculpture, photograms, drawings, and photographs that explore opposites and reversals; through 3/25. Debs & Co., 529 W. 20th St. (647-7080).

Carolanna Parlato—Abstract paintings that suggest pools of floating color; through 3/28. Coploff, 526 W. 26th St. (674-1024).

Bruce Sargeant/Mark Beard—Portraits of English and Continental gentry painted between the two world wars/Hand-colored Polaroid transfer prints of the artist's family and friends. Through 4/5. Wessel + O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. (242-8811).

Mark Sheinkman/Meg Webster—Sculptural paintings/New large-format and black-and-white photographs of farm animals. Through 4/18. Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. (243-3753).

John Wesley—A selection of paintings and works on paper from 1968 to 1997; through 3/21. Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. (633-6555).

Other

Bernard Chaet—Paintings of landscapes and seascapes in Cape Ann, Massachusetts; through 4/4. New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. (673-6466).

Elizabeth Cooper—Abstract paintings whose surfaces combine poured washes, dripped skeins, and thick puddles of paint; through 3/28. Smith, 47th St. and Lexington Ave. (832-8831).

Steve Keene—New works by this artist who makes between 40 and 50 paintings a day and sells them for between five and ten dollars each; through 3/27. CBGB's 313, 313 Bowery St. (677-0455).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

China Institute—125 E. 65th St. (627-4424). "Scent of Ink," 50 masterworks of Chinese painting, with hand scrolls, hanging scrolls, and album leaves; through 6/20.

Sculpture Center—167 E. 69th St. (879-3500). "Seeing & Believing," with works by Fox, Grimmer, Hendee, Lindberg, others; through 3/24.

57th Street Area

Boone—745 Fifth Ave. (752-2929). A comparison of the methods, concerns, and influence of sculptors of different generations, with work by Artschwager, Bourgeois, Fischli, Weiss, others; through 3/28.

Equitable Gallery—787 Seventh Ave. (554-4818), Mon.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 12–5. "The Dutch in the Americas, 1600–1800," with rare prints, maps, and illustrated books from the John Carter Brown Library; through 4/4.

Rosenfeld—24 W. 57th St. (247-0082). Twentieth-century masterworks by African-American artists Alston, Catlett, Delaney, Gilliam, others; through 3/22.

SoHo and TriBeCa

Art in General—79 Walker St. (219-0473). "Scale, Relatively Speaking," with works by Abrahamson, Andrus, Burns, Engler, others; through 4/4.

The Drawing Center—35 Wooster St. (219-2166). Drawings by Buckley, Chagoya, Christie, Coen, others; through 3/28.

Feature—76 Greene St. (941-7077). Works by Harrison, Lazarus, Linn, Robbins, Wurtz, others; through 3/28.

Kent—67 Prince St. (966-4500). "A Delicate Condition," with works by Applebroog, Bing, Cusick, Dickson, others; 3/14–4/25.

Ross—568 Broadway (343-2161). "Winter Group," with works by Anderson, Birch, Cherry, Evans, others; through 3/28.

Thread Waxing Space—476 Broadway (966-9520). "Archigram: Experimental Architecture, 1961–74," with over 400 drawings, models, multimedia installations, magazines, and re-created environments; through 4/25.

Tilton—49 Greene St. (941-1775). "Esperanto '98," a test of the theory of art as a universal language, with works by Sangar, Tuggar, Tzaig, and Zhijie; through 4/10.

Chelsea

Art Resources Transfer—504 W. 22nd St. (691-5956). A conversation exhibit of works by David Lamb and Jack Pospisil, plus recent works by Amanda Guest and Dexter Buell; through 3/26.

Dorfman Projects—529 W. 20th St. (691-5956). "The Tip of the Iceberg Part II: A Response to New York City's Museums," a show spanning a 40 year period, with the work of seven woman artists in all media, including Amos, Bezzola, Fish, Letitia, others; through 3/21.

Elder—529 W. 20th St. (462-2600). "Decorative, Functional, and Sculptural Objects for the Garden," with works by Calyer, Swanson, Godowsky, Tannen, others; through 5/2.

Greene Naftali—526 W. 26th St. (463-7770). "Super Freaks: Post Pop & the New Generation;" through 4/18.

Marks—523 W. 24th St. (243-0200). "Maverick," new sculpture, photography, drawing, painting, and video from Bustamante, Fischli, Fritsch, Horn, others; through 4/11.

Protetch—511 W. 22nd St. (633-6999). "Double Kitsch: Painters from China," the work of avant-garde artists exploring materialism, tradition, fashion, and transition; through 3/28.

Rare—435 W. 14th St. (645-5591). "California Current," with works by Colson, Ellis, Giffin, Hoff, others; through 4/14.

Other

Columbia University—Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Broadway and 116th St. (854-7288). "The Visual Front: Spanish Civil War Posters;" through 3/28.

Photography

Cecil Beaton—Portraits, still life, and fashion work by the English photographer (1925–1967); through 4/18. Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (966-6223).

Andrew Bush—A fifteen-year survey of photographs, including works from the series "Bonnettstown Hall," "Vector Portraits," "Envelopes," and "Business Cards"; through 4/4. Saul, 560 Broadway (431-0747).

Robert Cumming—A survey of the artist's photographs of architecture based on nautical motifs; through 4/4. Borden, 560 Broadway (431-0166).

Andreas Feininger—Photographs of urban and industrial landscapes from the thirties through the eighties; through 4/12. SoHo Triad, 107 Grand St. (965-9500).

Charles Hagen—New color photographs in which the artist's 4-year-old daughter is a primary subject; 3/12–4/26. Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave. (242-7767).

Jindrich Heisler—Surrealist photomontages and manipulated photographs by the Czech poet and artist (1914–1953); through 4/4. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (794-4444).

ICP—1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (voluntary contribution 6–8), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 students and seniors. "Micha Bar-Am: An Israeli Photobiography." Images of life in Israel by its premier photojournalist; through 5/31.

ICP Midtown—1133 Sixth Ave., at 43rd St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8, Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 seniors and students. "Robert Capa: Photographs." A retrospective of the legendary photojournalist known for his war images; through 6/7.

Craig Kalpakjian—Cibachrome prints of interiors and architectural fixtures that explore the psychology of space; through 3/28. Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (980-5454).

Alexander Liberman—Portraits of artists, writers, dancers, and others by the artist, sculptor, and former editorial director of all Condé Nast magazines; 3/12–4/18. Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. (517-3755).

Ralph Eugene Meatyard—Vintage prints from the photographer's estate; 3/12–4/25. Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (334-0010).

Miller—138 Spring St. (226-1220). Photographs of Vietnam by Burrows, Conner, Epstein, An-My Le, Robinson; through 4/11.

Thomas Ruff—Photomontages that suggest propaganda posters and incorporate collected images that have been manipulated by computer; through 3/28. 303, 525 W. 22nd St. (255-1121).

David Smith—Photographs taken by the sculptor between 1931 and 1965, of arrangements of found objects, New York City, the landscape around his studio in Bolton Landing, New York, and his sculptures; through 4/18. Marks, 523 W. 24th St. (243-0200).

Paul Strand—Photographs that Strand took of his garden during the final years of his life at his home in Orgeval, France, many of which have not been previously exhibited or published; through 4/4. Aperture's Burden Gallery, 20 E. 23rd St. (505-5555).

Susan Unterberg—Color photographs of landscapes in upstate New York and of the homes of the photographer's fellow artists and friends; through 4/4. Richardson, 560 Broadway (343-1255).

William Wegman—New Polaroid prints and editioned digital ink-jet prints that depict the artist's dogs with a new simplicity of form suggestive of classical statuary; 3/12–4/25. Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (759-7999).

Museums

American Craft Museum—"Paper + Finland = Art." Works on paper by contemporary Finnish artists; through 5/10. . . . "Expressions in Wood: Masterworks From the Wornick Collection." Turned and shaped wood artworks by 56 artists from the United States, Europe, and Australia, drawn from the collection of Anita and Ron Wornick; through 5/10. 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535); Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 10–6, Thurs. till 8 (pay as you wish 6–8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History—"Sacred Mountains of the World." Color photographs of revered mountains around the world; through 3/31. . . . "The Nature of Diamonds." An exhibition exploring all aspects of the mineral, from its geological origins to its place in history, art, adornment, and literature, featuring significant gems from around the world; through 4/26. . . . "Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897–1902." A commemoration of the American Museum of Natural History's Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897–1902, including approximately 100 archival photographs of scenes from daily life; through 5/31. Central Park West at 79th St. (769-5100); Sun.–Thurs. 10–5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10–8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Asia Society—"Great Cities, Small Treasures: The Ancient World of the Indus Valley." More than 100 examples of sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, seals, and other artifacts made by inhabitants of the Indus River Valley between 2600 B.C.E. and 1900 B.C.E., drawn primarily from collections in Pakistan; through 5/3. 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA), Tues.–Sat. 11–6, Sun. 12–5, Thurs. 11–8 (6–8 free admission); $4, $2 seniors and students.

Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts—"Finnish Modernism in Design: Utopian Ideals and Everyday Ideals, 1930–1997." A survey of works produced by Finnish designers for the ceramics firm Arabia, the glass factories of iittala, Karhula, and Nuutajarvi, and the textile and clothing manufacturer Marimekko; through 6/14. 18 W. 86th St. (501-3000), Tues.–Sun. 11–5 (Thurs. to 8); $2, $1 seniors and students.

Bronx Museum of the Arts—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Studio Museum in Harlem; through 3/15. . . . "The Picnic: An Installation by Ernesto Pujol"; through 3/15. 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. 3–9, Thurs. and Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $3 suggested donation; $2 students; $1 senior citizens, children under 12 free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Jewels of the Romanovs: Treasures of the Russian Imperial Court." 250 objects and works of art spanning three centuries of the Romanov Dynasty, among them royal portraits, court gowns, military uniforms, and a selection of Crown Jewels; 3/20–7/5. . . . "Joan Snyder: Working in Brooklyn." Works on paper from the past decade; through 6/14. . . . "Scattered Petals, Fallen Leaves, Shards of Glass: The Work of Bing Hu, Working in Brooklyn." An exhibition of sixteen sculptures that incorporate material found on the streets of Brooklyn by the Chinese artist; through 5/10. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–9, Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 students, $1.50 seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Smithsonian Institution—"The Jewels of Lalique." A retrospective of jewelry by the French art Nouveau artist-designer; through 4/12. . . . "Arquitectonica: The Times Square Project." The first New York exhibition of photographs, models, and drawings by the Miami-based architectural firm, highlighting its plans for a hotel, entertainment, and retail complex at 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue; through 5/10. 2 E. 91st St. (849-8300), Wed.–Sat. 10–5. Sun. 12–5, Tues. 10–9 (free admission 5–9); $3, $1.50 seniors and students.

Dahesh Museum—"Training an Artist: Alexandre Cabanel and the Academic Process in Nineteenth-Century France." Paintings and drawings by the nineteenth-century French artist; 3/10–6/13. 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (759-0606), Tues.–Sat. 11–6; free.

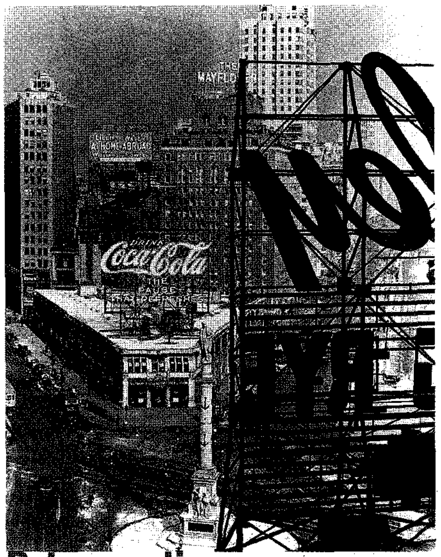
Dia Center for the Arts—"Tracey Moffatt: *Free-falling*." A group of 25 photographs and a video installation by the Australian artist and filmmaker; through 6/14. . . . "Richard Serra: *Torqued Ellipses*." Three monumental sculptures of Cor-Ten steel that explore the shaping of space rather than material as their primary subject; through 6/14. . . . "Dan Flavin: 1962/63, 1970, 1996." Three installations using fluorescent light and six separate fluorescent works by the late sculptor; through 6/14. 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912), Thurs.–Sun. 12–6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio—"Diamantina Gonzalez: Recurrent Memories." A site-specific installation about the relationship between time, space, and memory; through 3/29. . . . "Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture From the Caribbean." The first comprehensive survey of the art of the Taíno, the dominant culture in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Bahamas from about 1200 A.D. to the arrival of Columbus in 1492; through 5/3. . . . "Brian Nissen, Chinampas: A Vision of the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco." Bronze, ceramic, and wood sculpture and mixed-media assemblages based on the form of *chinampas*, artificial islands originally created by the Aztecs for agricultural purposes; through 3/29. 1230 Fifth Ave. (831-7272); Wed.–Sun. 11–5, Thurs. 12–7; $4, $2 seniors and students.

Frick Collection—"Robert Adam, The Creative Mind: From the Sketch to the Finished Drawing." Sixty-six drawings and watercolors by the renowned eighteenth-century architect Robert Adam, his brother and partner, James, and artists employed in their office that were selected from the 9,000 Adam drawings acquired by Sir John Soane in 1833; through 4/5. 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6, Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Grey Art Gallery—"Shiro Kuramata 1934–1991." Furniture and objects by one of postwar Japan's most influential designers; through 5/2. 100 Washington Square East (998-6780), Wed. 11–8, Tues., Thurs., Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–5; $2.50 suggested donation.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—"China: 5,000 Years." More than 500 artworks and artifacts from seventeen provinces of China; through 6/3. . . .



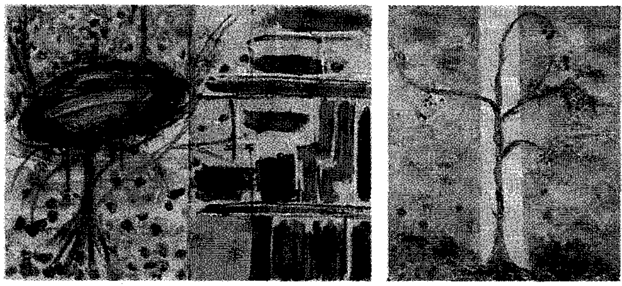
Retrospective

The City Lens

Even at the beginning of her career, when she was living in Paris, the Ohio-born photographer Berenice Abbott (1898–1991) demonstrated a commitment to art above and beyond the call of duty. After working as an assistant to Man Ray, she opened her own studio and acquired a reputation for stylish portraits of Jean Cocteau, James Joyce, and others in her circle of artists and writers. But her dedication extended beyond her own work. In 1927, after learning of the death of her mentor, Eugène Atget, and fearing his work would be forgotten, Abbott tracked down Atget's executor, borrowed money from friends, and purchased the photographer's 1,400 glass-plate negatives and 7,800 prints. (She remained the custodian of his work until 1968, when she sold the Atget Collection to the Museum of Modern Art.) That experience, coupled with her return to New York in 1929, led to the most ambitious undertaking of her career—she decided not only to document New York City but also to reveal its inner spirit as Atget had done in his photographs of Paris. To this day, Abbott's magnificently composed photographs of buildings in Manhattan and the outer boroughs—about to go on view in the Museum of the City of New York's latest exhibition, "Berenice Abbott's Changing New York, 1935–1939" (March 14 through June 21)—remain the most complete visual record of the city's architecture of that period. What is less known, however, are Abbott's extraordinary efforts to complete *Changing New York*. She applied to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation for financial assistance in 1932 and 1934 and was twice turned down. She asked the New-York Historical Society for money in 1932, without success. Finally, in 1935, Abbott's project was accepted by the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration and won sponsorship from the Museum of the City of New York, which bought 305 of the photographs for the cost of materials. *Changing New York* became a book in 1939; nearly 60 years later, Abbott's images of New York in flux resonate with the same stark power. EDITH NEWHALL

"After *Mountains and Sea*: Frankenthaler 1956–1959." A survey of the artist's early paintings, including her groundbreaking *Mountains and Sea* of 1952, which laid the stylistic groundwork for her subsequent works; through 5/3. . . . "Visions of Paris: Robert Delauney's Series." An exhibition focusing on the artist's series paintings of Saint-Sêverin, the Eiffel Tower, and Paris as seen through his window; through 5/24. 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (423-3500); Sun.–Wed. 10–6, Fri. and Sat. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $7 seniors and students.

Guggenheim Museum SoHo—"China: 5,000 Years"; through 5/25. 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500), Sun. and Wed.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–8 (6–8 pay what you wish); $8, $5 seniors and students.



Talent When she's not painting on canvas, Joan Snyder puts her expressionistic, often autobiographical imagery on paper. Her drawings and prints from the past ten years, whose overall theme is the cyclical nature of life, are the subject of the Brooklyn Museum of Art's latest "Working in Brooklyn" exhibition. (200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; through June 14.)

Jewish Museum—"Still More Distant Journeys: The Artistic Emigrations of Lasar Segall." The first major United States retrospective of the preeminent Brazilian artist (1891–1957) who was a major contributor to the development of German Expressionism and and Brazilian modernist painting; Through 5/10. . . . ASSIGNMENT: RESCUE, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee." The story behind the 1940–41 rescue mission undertaken by Varian Fry, a New York–based Frenchman who arranged safe passage out of France for many anti-Nazi artists, writers, scientists, and political refugees; through 3/29. . . . "Blackbird, blackbird." An installation by Kristin Oppenheim that is the first exhibition of the museum's Contemporary Artist Projects series; through 3/15. 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11–5:45, Tues. 11–8 (Tues. after 5; free); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art—"Paul Strand circa 1916." An exhibition of 50 rare prints tracing the artist's transition from soft-focus pictorial style to modernism; through 5/31. . . . "Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor." The first comprehensive exhibition of the work of the eighteenth-century French sculptor; through 5/24. . . . "Pierre-Paul Prud'hon." The first American retrospective of the works of the eighteenth-century French court painter and draftsman; through 6/7. . . . "Conversion by Candlelight: The Four Magdalens by Georges de la Tour." Four full-length paintings of Mary Magdalene seated before a mirror, her profile illuminated by candlelight; through 3/15. . . . "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part I: Calligraphy." An exhibition surveying the development of Islamic calligraphy; through 6/28. . . . "When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles in the Metropolitan and Cleveland Museums of Art"; through 5/17. . . . "Evocative Fragments." A selection of twentieth-century paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs depicting fragments of the human body; through 6/14. . . . "Gianni Versace." A tribute to the late designer that reveals the influence of art on his fashion and theater designs; through 3/22. 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $8 contribution, $4 children and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $8, $4 seniors and students.

Museum at F.I.T.—"Norman Norell." The first retrospective of the American designer (1900–1972) known for his tailoring perfection; through 4/18. . . . "Toledo/Toledo: A Marriage of Art and Fashion." Approximately 100 pieces of clothing designed by Isabel Toledo, and paintings, fashion illustrations, sketches, sculptures, and mannequins by her husband, Ruben Toledo; through 4/25. Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5966), Tues.–Fri. 12–8, Sat. 10–5; free.

Museum for African Art—"African Faces, African Figures: The Arman Collection." African sculptures from the collection of the sculptor Armand P. Arman; through 4/19. 593 Broadway, bet. Houston and Prince Sts. (966-1313), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $5, $2.50 seniors, students, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art—"Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century: Perspectives on Patterning." A survey of works by five self-taught artists whose oeuvres are characterized by a consistent use of overall patterning, including Morris Hirshfeld, Leroy Person, Martin Ramirez, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, and Joseph Yoakum; 3/14–6/7. 2 Lincoln Square (595-9533), Tues.–Sun. 11:30–7:30; free.

Museum of Modern Art—"Chuck Close." A retrospective of paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs by the American artist known for his monumental, psychologically charged portraits of artists and anonymous sitters; through 5/26. . . . "Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism." The first United States retrospective of the works of the renowned Finnish architect, designer, and town planner, including sketches and competition drawings, models, new and archival photographs, and examples of furniture and glass; through 5/19. . . . "Fernand Léger." A retrospective of paintings and drawings by the French artist (1881–1955) from his early series "Contrastes de Formes (1913–14)," the first fully abstract works to emerge from Cubism, through his last realist paintings of construction workers of the late forties and early fifties; through 5/12. . . . "Fabrications." An exhibition developed jointly by MOMA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Wexner Center for the Arts, comprising a total of twelve installations simultaneously constructed at all three venues by architects and architectural teams; through 4/28. . . . "Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons: Spoken Softly With Mama." A site-specific installation exploring the artist's African-Cuban roots; through 5/26. 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480); Sat.–Tues. 10:30–6, Thurs. 10:30–6, Fri. 10:30–8:30 (4:30–8:30 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $9.50, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York—"Berenice Abbott's Changing New York, 1935–1939." A selection of 175 prints from the museum's own collection of the photographer's "Changing New York" project of the thirties that was funded by the Federal Art Project of the W.P.A. and sponsored by the museum; 3/14–6/21. . . . "Bridging New York." An exhibition of paintings, prints, drawings, postcards, and vintage photographs exploring the role played by bridges in the creation of Greater New York; through 6/28. . . . "New York From Above: An Aerial View." Paintings depicting aerial views of the city by Spelman Evans Downer; through 6/14. . . . "Beyond the Grave: Cultures of Queens Cemeteries." Photographs of cemeteries in Queens taken by Dr. Ilana Harlow; through 3/8. 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

New York Public Library—"A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Basement Publishing in New York City and Elsewhere." An exhibition focusing on the writers, artists, publishers, and communities who produced publications associated with the use of the mimeograph machine from the sixties through the early eighties; through 5/30. . . . "Subject Matters: Photography, Romana Javitz, and the New York Public Library." The story of the visionary curator Romana Javitz, who during her 39-year tenure (1929–1968), built the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library into a world-renowned resource of documentary photography; through 3/28. Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (869-8089); Mon. 10–6, Tues.–Wed. 11–6, Thurs.–Sat. 10–6; free.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center—"John Coplans: A Self-Portrait"; through 3/29. . . . "Jackie Winsor: Sculpture"; through 4/12. . . . "10 Years Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany"; through 4/12. . . . "Matthew McCaslin, Susan Etkin, Michael Joo"; through 4/12. . . . "Installations/Projects—Siah Armajani, Per Barclay, Shane Cullen, and Philip Napier"; through 4/12. . . . "Vertical Painting Show"; through 6/28. . . . "Wish You Luck." 22nd National and International Studio Program Exhibition; 3/15–4/19. . . . "Meg Webster 'Pool' "; 3/15–6/28. 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave. (718-784-2084), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $4 suggested donation, $2 students and seniors.

Pierpont Morgan Library—"A Seal Upon Thine Heart: Glyptic Art of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3500–2100 B.C." A selection of seals from the Library's collection and from the Yale Babylonian Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and several private collections; through 4/26. . . . "To Observe and Imagine: British Drawings and Watercolors, 1600–1900"; through 5/3. 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5, Sat. 10:30–6; Sun. 12–6; $6; $4 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Bronx Museum of the Arts; through 3/15. 144 W. 125th St. (864-4500); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 seniors and students.

Whitney Museum of American Art—"Bill Viola." The first full-scale overview of the work of the California-based video artist, including 15 installations, 25 videotapes, and drawings and notebooks from the past 25 years; through 5/10. . . . "Arthur Dove: A Retrospective." Paintings, assemblages, pastels, and drawings by the pioneering American modernist; through 4/12. . . . "Collection in Context: 1948." A multimedia exhibition surveying important artwork, music, film, and news footage from that year; through 3/15. 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (570-3676); Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 11–6, Thurs. 1–8; $8, $7 students and seniors (free Thurs. 6–8).

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris—"*Garden of Qián*, by Ming Fay." A fantasy garden of tree and fruits handcrafted from paper, wire, synthetic fibers, and layers of polyurethane; through 4/17. 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550), Mon.–Sat. 11–6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's—502 Park Ave. (546-1000). 3/11 at 10 and 2: "The Nineteenth Century." On view from 3/6.

Christie's East—219 E. 67th St. (546-1000). 3/11 at 10 and 2: "Twentieth-Century Paintings." On view from 3/7. 3/17 at 1: "Antiquities and Souvenirs of the Grand Tour." On view from 3/13.

Doyle—175 E. 87th St. (427-2730). 3/11 at 10: "Fine Furniture, Decorations, and Paintings." On view from 3/7. 3/12 at 10: "Collectibles." On view from 3/7.

Sotheby's—1334 York Ave. at 72nd St. (606-7000). 3/12 at 10:15: "Impressionist Paintings." On view from 3/7. 3/13 at 10:15 and 2: "Art Deco." On view from 3/7. 3/14 at 10 and 2: "Wine." 3/17 at 10:15: "Contemporary Art." On view from 3/13.

Swann Galleries—104 E. 25th St. (254-4710). 3/12 at 10:30: "The Paul Hammer Library." On view from 3/7.

Photographs by J. Snyder, courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

restaurants

Starving Artists...Veruka...Nation

Manhattan

Lower New York

A.J.'s Niota—This casual Indian duplex makes for a nice diversion from SoHo's French-and-Italian-restaurant stranglehold. The downstairs bar and upstairs dining room are ornately decorated with carved wood and silver doors, and the menu features whole tandoori fish, lots of vegetarian options, and weekend brunch. *337 W. Broadway (431-6222). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Alison on Dominick—An impeccably turned-out room with blue banquettes and tender lighting. Perfectionist owner Alison Becker Hurt makes sure that all is well. *38 Dominick St., nr. Hudson St. (727-1188). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Cellar in the Sky—This oenophile's dream changes its menu, and its well-chosen wine pairings, monthly; the one constant is the spectacular view. Four courses of creatively prepared, seasonal American fare costs $60, and the flights of three wines begin at $35. Lately, offerings have included a chili-grilled blue-prawn salad with mango marmalade and Cuba libre spices, roasted pheasant with spinach gnocchi, and a trio of Sonoma bottlings. Jacket required; love of heights recommended. *1 World Trade Center (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Chanterelle—Spare and elegant, virtually religious, this TriBeCa restaurant is a favorite among those who want a Big Deal. Chef David Waltuck runs a grand kitchen—seafood sausage, cold fruit soups, and anything he does with truffles in season. Wife Karen runs the front room with class and warmth. *2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (966-6960). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Layla—A Middle Eastern feast, complete with gyrating belly dancer, brought to you by Drew Nieporent and his TriBeCa production team. Menu highlights include crabmeat phyllo, cinnamon-braised lamb shank with okra, and toasted couscous and almond ice milk. *211 W. Broadway, at Franklin St. (431-0700). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Montrachet—Owner Drew Nieporent now has five places in New York, including Nobu, Layla, Zeppole at the TriBakery, and Tribeca Grill, and another in San Francisco. But this is his baby—attractive, lively, and one of the first truly great restaurants in lower Manhattan. There's lunch on Fridays—try the Roquefort-and-pear salad—and dinner Monday through Saturday. *239 W. Broadway, nr. White St. (219-2777). (E) AE only.*

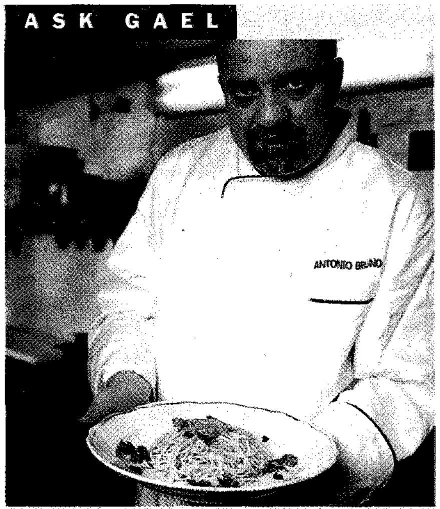
Morton's of Chicago—The second New York location of the national steakhouse chain. Portions are huge, quality is consistent, and, in case you haven't noticed, beef is back. *90 West St. (732-5665). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Nobu—The great Nobu Matsuhisa—actually, he's young, good-looking, and incredibly hip—has arrived in TriBeCa. And New Yorkers haven't tasted Japanese cooking like this—unless, of course, they've visited Matsuhisa's restaurant in L.A. *105 Hudson St. (219-0500). (E) AE, MC, V.*

The Odeon—Downtown has fallen in love all over again with this TriBeCa institution. The bar's out of Dashiell Hammett, and the dining room gets everyone from the banker, his wife, and their 2-year-old to movie stars, artists, and assorted big-deal celebrities. *145 W. Broadway, nr. Thomas St. (233-0507). (M) AE, MC, V.*

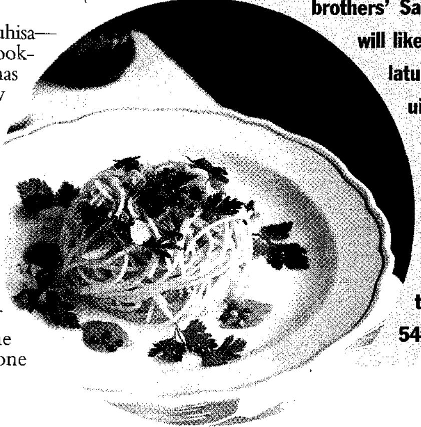
Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *109 Spring St. (274-8883). Also, 240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

ASK GAEL



Shock me with something Italian.

The Bruno fratelli—chef Antonio and maitre d' Gerardo—have recently been dipping more deeply into their childhood memories of wartime Salerno for rustic home dishes that rely on what is easily at hand in the hills and waters near Naples. Now their Agnelli, Cuomo, and Revlon habitués can find seafood-stuffed cuttlefish grilled on an endive bed, and twice-cooked bread with broccoli rabe and white beans in a vegetable broth along with the more sophisticated offerings at the brothers' San Pietro. Adventurers will like the sharp kick of colatura di alici, where a liquid ooze of anchovy aged in grottoes on the Amalfi coast is tossed with garlic and parsley on spaghetti—a first in Manhattan, they believe. (18 East 54th Street; 753-9015.)



Pierino—An Italian dining room full of businesspeople and city politicians for lunch and offering dinner for the bankers on their way uptown with meta-traditional dishes like lobster and steak. Yes, that was Peter Vallone. *107 Reade St. (513-0610). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Provence—Lots of people have gotten engaged in the charming garden at this authentic country French restaurant; even more have sampled the bourride, bouillabaisse, and bass flambé. If you can't actually make it to the Côte d'Azur, this is the next best thing. *38 MacDougal St. (475-7500). (M–E) AE.*

Raoul's—The dull roar in this cavelike bistro—aging gracefully amid the high-strung Thoroughbreds of SoHo's restaurant racetrack—is a heartwarming sound. *180 Prince St., nr. Thompson St. (966-3518). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain—This 1807 landmark farmhouse serves up huge portions of smoked chicken and grilled ribs, plus regional appetizers and desserts. Bring those breath mints and Handi-Wipes for a $17.95 all-you-can-eat on Monday night. *143 Spring St. (431-3993). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tribeca Grill—Though this spacious, brick-walled restaurant sometimes serves as canteen for the film execs (and movie stars) in offices upstairs, the creative American cuisine and lively bar scene make it a popular downtown destination. Known for its roasted meats and fish specials. *375 Greenwich St., at Franklin St. (941-3900). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Wall Street Club—Until April, this third-floor annex of Wall Street Kitchen & Bar serves only lunch. If you have anything to celebrate, do: Ten vintages of Dom Pérignon are available by the glass. The modern American menu features comte ravioli, oyster pan roast, and bacon-wrapped brook trout with spaetzle. *70 Broad St. (797-9500). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Windows on the World—Chef Michael Lomonaco, formerly of the '21' Club, has landed at this landmark restaurant known for what may be the most spectacular view of Manhattan Island. His new menu focuses on sophisticated renditions of American food, including skillet-roasted bluepoint oysters with sweet shallot-caviar cream; open raviolo of forest mushrooms, pumpkin, and sage; and Maine lobster with truffles, root vegetables, and buttermilk biscuits. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's superlative wine cellar. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Below 14th Street, East

Gotham Bar & Grill—Alfred Portale's kitchen, with its architectural ingenuity and whimsical creativity, serves as a finishing school for the city's all-star chefs before they launch their own careers. This awesome dining temple has long been a staple. *12 E. 12th St. (620-4020). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Haveli—Haveli distinguishes itself from the Sixth Street strip, for its food as much as its upscale decor. Possibly the only East Village restaurant with an *intentionally* shattered windowpane. *100 Second Ave., nr. 6th St. (982-0533). (I–M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Miracle Grill—One of the earliest pioneers on the East Village dining scene, this comfortable Mexican cantina is especially welcoming in warm weather, when the garden is a serene urban oasis. The grilled-vegetable plate surpasses most. *112 First Ave., nr. 7th St. (254-2353). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Photographs by Robert Wright.

Osso Buco—Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. *88 University Pl., nr. 11th St. (645-4525). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Three of Cups—Proving that the East Village has room enough for another wood-burning oven pizza parlor besides Two Boots. The "mickey," a charred spud dripping with butter, shouldn't be missed. *83 First Ave., at 5th St. (388-0059). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Below 14th Street, West

Andalousia—This relatively undiscovered Village Moroccan rightly prides itself on its roster of tagines and couscous specials. B'stilla is a standout. *28 Cornelia St. (929-3693). (I) MC, V.*

Bar Cichetti—Modeled after a typical bar in Venice, where patrons gather for a glass of wine—choose here among 50—and small snacks called *cichetti* (think Italian tapas). Sample among appetizer-size portions of rice balls, fried meatballs, frittatas, and crostini, or, should these snacks merely whet the appetite, have a full meal of pasta, chicken, fish, or beef. Perfect for pre- or post-Film Forum noshing. *220 W. Houston St. (229-0314). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bar Pitti—This Tuscan trattoria, with tables spilling out onto the sidewalk, has simpler, cheaper food than Da Silvano next door, but it's just as good a spot to sip an espresso and watch the Village foot traffic. Great fettunta. *268 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-3300). (I–M) ($).*

Blue Note Jazz Club and Restaurant—Should you develop an appetite while listening to some of the world's best jazz acts, this famous Village club offers a full menu, with such Continental fare as shrimp with scallops and salmon with champagne sauce. Open for brunch, too. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Silvano—Trattoria with tables out front converts this thoroughfare into a people promenade. Great food and views of the local color. Yes, that was Anna Wintour. *260 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-2343). (M) AE, MC, V.*

53 Grove Street Cafe—This American bistro on a charming Village side street has the requisite exposed brick walls and outdoor patio (in warm weather). There's a raw bar from which one—actually, two—could order the plateau fruits de mer, which comes with vodka or champagne. Or try the sesame-crusted tuna with lemongrass marinade, the filet mignon in bourbon sauce, or the salmon en papillote with oranges. *53 Grove St. (924-8299). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Greenwich Cafe—This Village café, with its plush antique wing chairs and rococo mirrors, has a loungy feel and is open around the clock with a menu that crosses every border. Representative items include crab cakes with lobster sauce and fennel tempura, grilled salmon with jasmine rice, and a veggie burger with minted couscous. No cover for the jazz brunch. *75 Greenwich Ave. (255-5489). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Le Zoo—The newest West Village scene, with lots of Left Bank ambience. The menu sticks to standards like poulet grand mère, saumon en croute, and cassolette. *314 W. 11th St. (620-0393). (M) AE, MC, V.*

One if by Land, Two if by Sea—Elegant Village restaurant situated within an eighteenth-century carriage house previously owned by Aaron Burr. Four fireplaces and nightly piano music enhance a fine menu of American specialties like beef Wellington. *17 Barrow St. (228-0822). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Salam Cafe and Restaurant—This casual Arabic restaurant ensconced in a Village brownstone offers a broad variety of Middle Eastern food, including kebabs, couscous, and lamb with yogurt-and-sesame sauce, plus lots of vegetarian options. Try the Lebanese wine. *104 W. 13th St. (741-0277). (I–M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tio Pepe—A reliably festive spot for classic Mexican and Spanish fare, from tapas to paella Valenciana, with an enclosed sidewalk café and skylit garden room. *168 W. 4th St. (242-9338). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Alva—Bare lightbulbs evoke Thomas Edison, the namesake of this sleek spot invented by Charles Palmer and designer Fernando Saralegui, but the food is all very twentieth-century: crispy shrimp cocktail, cod-and-salmon cakes, veal stew, an exciting cheese course. *36 E. 22nd St. (228-4399). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

An American Place—This venerable midtown spot is to New York as Chez Panisse is to Berkeley. With his eclectic American menu, Larry Forgione made the national cuisine interesting again. *2 Park Ave., at 32nd St. (684-2122). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Angelo & Maxie's Steakhouse—This luxurious new steakhouse serves enormous portions of beef—plus alternatives for artery-watchers—to a crowd that's come to have a good, gluttonous time. Many choose to follow their meal with a leisurely smoke, which they're welcome to procure in the well-stocked cigar store. *233 Park Ave. So., at 19th St. (220-9200). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Back Porch—Ideal spot for Murray Hill residents to meet for drinks alfresco and southwestern-flavored fare. Sit outdoors as long as the weather holds. *488 Third Ave., at 33rd St. (685-3828). (I) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Bambou—There's a new flavor on East 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like ackee-and-callaloo tart with scotch-bonnet-and-tomato salsa, and coconut-curry lobster with banana-lentil salad. The relaxing, tropical dining room and bar have already attracted such boldfaced names and beautiful faces as Harry Belafonte, Marisa Tomei, Iman, and Roshumba. *243 E. 14th St. (358-0012). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bolo—There's nothing discreet about Bobby Flay's neo-Spanish cooking. In a room that reminds you of Gaudí by way of Pee-wee Herman, Flay turns out fiery, bold dishes like oven-roasted mushrooms with goat cheese and chili oil as well as paella with curried shellfish and chicken. We *love* the white-peach sangría. *23 E. 22nd St. (228-2200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Campagna—The *Letterman* crowd is at one table, Time Warner honchos are at another, and isn't that . . . ? Despite the frenzy of having become Media Central, this smart little trattoria serves some of the most satisfying Italian food in Manhattan. Chef Mark Straussman is to thank for dishes like rabbit in polenta, gnocchi with wild mushrooms and truffle oil, and grilled tuna with beets. *24 E. 21st St. (460-0900). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

El Parador Cafe—Very possibly the oldest Mexican restaurant in New York City, this comfortable, dependable establishment is known for its enormous selection of premium tequilas and traditional dishes like mole poblano, carnitas, and duck with cuipotle glaze. *325 E. 34th St. (679-6812). (M) MC, V.*

Gramercy Tavern—As a second act to Danny Meyer's much-loved Union Square Cafe, this Flatiron American newcomer doesn't disappoint. The main dining room manages to be both impressive and cozy, the service superlative, and Tom Colicchio's food inspired. For lesser appetites and lower budgets, the bar menu in the Tavern Room is equally delicious. Orchestrate your own cheese course and sample the varied selection of wines by the glass. *42 E. 20th St. (477-0777). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

i Trulli—A Southern Italian restaurant that aims to prove that tomato sauce is not crucial for survival, i Trulli succeeds with tasty focaccia, homemade sausage, tripe, and venison. In warm weather, the garden is a perfect midtown escape. *122 E. 27th St. (481-7372). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Les Halles—Even though it hasn't been around forever, this utterly perfect re-creation of a Left Bank bistro seems like it has. This is the place to come for onion soup, steak-frites, celeri rémoulade, crème caramel—that sort of thing. *411 Park Ave. So., bet. 28th and 29th Sts. (679-4111). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa Grill—Chef Bobby Flay believes in big flavors and big portions. He developed his own signature style, plundering the ingredients of the American Southwest for such mouth-watering creations as roasted-garlic shrimp tamales and ancho-honey-glazed salmon. Loud, stylish, and loads of fun, especially for those partaking of the house drink, a cactus-pear margarita. *102 Fifth Ave., nr. 16th St. (807-7400). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Novitá—A beautiful new Flatiron restaurant with upscale, nouvelle Italian. Try, especially, the handmade pastas, which seem to have only beneficial effects on all the fashion types and Elite models who've made this room their home away from home. *102 E. 22nd St. (677-2222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

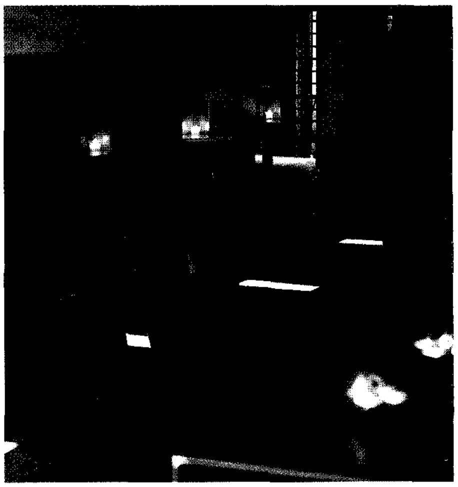
Oyster Bar—When a fire temporarily shuttered this Manhattan landmark, its long-faithful clientele were bereft, unsure of what to do with themselves at lunchtime. The doors have reopened, the vaulted ceilings have been (for the most part) repaired, and the regulars are taking their places at the counter. Famous for its 25 varieties of oysters, extensive wine selection, and comprehensive seafood preparations, the restaurant is a magnet for commuters and tourists alike. *Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (490-6650). (M) AE, CB, DS, MC, V.*

Park Bistro—Provençal offerings prepared and served with notable agility in an intimate—sometimes crowded—setting. *414 Park Ave. at 28th St. (689-1360). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Patria—Zesty Latin American fare brought to you in a festive high-energy atmosphere. The three-story dining room suits the changing mood of diners: bright and airy by day and warm and earthy by

Opening
In the Drink

The club- and party-promoting owners of Veruka, which opens this weekend, are targeting that fickle, fashionable contingent who've colonized 147 and Moomba. They even hired Moomba's interior designer, who has adorned Veruka's loftlike space with paper collages and illuminated glass panels. But the emphasis in this duplex nightspot is clearly on imbibing: Its light menu of dips, salads, and sandwiches—plus the requisite caviar service—is only a supplement to its extensive list of cocktails, vodka tastings (six shots of different brands, or six flavors of Absolut), and champagne-sorbet concoctions. (525 Broome Street; 625-1717.)



Photograph by Kenneth Chen.

Ground Rules:

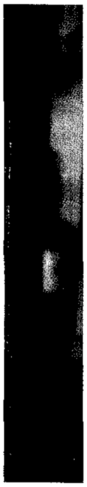
Here lie a few hundred of the city's more noteworthy restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive, $35 and over per place; (M) = moderate, $15–$30 per place; (I) = inexpensive, $15 and under per place.

Following each listing there is also a code indicating acceptable methods of payment: ($) = cash only, AE = American Express, CB = Carte Blanche, DC = Diners Club, DS = Discover, M = MasterCard, TM = Transmedia, V = Visa. "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted charge/credit card.

night. Chef Doug Rodriguez comes from Miami via a childhood in New York. Really. Try the Mojito, Patria's signature drink made from sugarcane. *250 Park Ave. So., nr. 20th St. (777-6211). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Piccolino—A country-style Italian restaurant offering homemade pastas and thin-crust pizzas in a peach stucco duplex. (The building is a century old.) Worth trying are the risotto pescatore, shrimp-pesto pizza, and veal quattroformaggio. *8 E. 36th St. (683-6444). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Rodeo Bar & Grill—This place bills itself as "the longest-running honky-tonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders who come for the live nightly music as much as for the Tex-Mex grub. Try the house-smoked baby back ribs, bison burgers, and Santa Fe hand rolls, or just grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar. *375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*



Rossini's—This elegant split-level restaurant offers Northern Italian cuisine and live music nightly. Chef Gilberto specializes in seafood, and private parties are easily accommodated. *108 E. 38th St. (683-0135). (E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Turkish Kitchen—This crimson-walled den has long been a beacon for adventurous eaters, who come for house specialties including kebabs, seafood, and a variety of Turkish appetizers. *386 Third Ave., nr. 27th St. (679-1810). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Union Square Cafe—The careful service, human-scale dining rooms, and peerless California café cuisine make this one of the best restaurants in the city. *21 E. 16th St. (243-4020). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

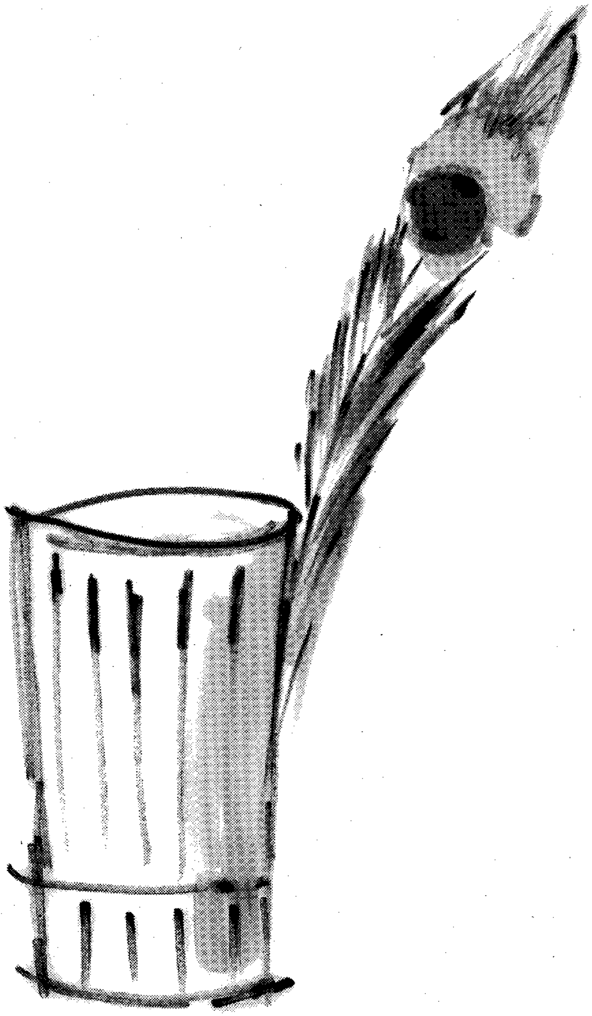
The Water Club—This romantic spot overlooking the East River is a favorite for formal affairs, but even your average demanding New York diner would be happy with the American menu and the airy, yacht club–like setting. As to be expected in this nautical environment, there's a heavy emphasis on seafood like lobster and soft-shell crabs, and a massive spread for Sunday brunch. Jackets suggested in the main dining room. *F.D.R. Drive via 23rd St. (683-3333). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Bright Food Shop—A Chelsea luncheonette with an innovative, healthy Mexican menu with Asian influences. Excellent desserts and a great selection of Mexican fruit sodas. *216 Eighth Ave., at 21st St. (243-4433). (I–M) ($).*

Bryant Park Grill—This long-awaited restaurant on the edge of the city's prettiest pocket park has been mobbed from day one. Go at an off-hour for Caesar salad, New York steak, soft-shell crabs, and scallion pancakes. *40th St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (840-6500). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caffe Bondí Ristorante—Popular with the photographers who work in the Flatiron district and foodies from all over who fill the garden in warm weather. Specializes in Sicilian dishes like coniglio alla stimparata, pasta con sarde, and cassata Siciliana. Open seven days a week, including weekend



Just in case you missed *The New York Times* review of Peacock Alley and our exciting new chef Laurent Gras, here's a quick summary:

★ ★ ★

"The three best meals I have had this year have all been at the same restaurant. Peacock Alley." *-Ruth Reichl*

PEACOCK ALLEY

THE WALDORF-ASTORIA 301 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 212.872.4895

brunch. *7 W. 20th St. (691-8136). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Umberto—Low-key Chelsea façade belies the extraordinary Italian offerings inside. Getting a table is no small task, especially in the evening. This is a Euro–New York crossroads. A mad cacophony of laughter and chatter in Brooklynese and Roman. Don't dress down. *107 W. 17th St. (989-0303). (E) AE only.*

Simply Pasta—Perfectly situated for pretheater, this moderately priced Northern Italian restaurant offers such dependable, fresh fare as Caesar salad, osso buco, and tirami su. *120 W. 41st St. (391-0805). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Soul Fixins'—Until now, this humble source of delicious soul food has been a convenient pit stop for lunch in the Penn Station–Macy's vicinity. Now house specialties like collard greens, macaroni and cheese, ribs, and sweet-potato pie are available for dinner or catered affairs. Closed weekends. *371 W. 34th St. (736-1345). (I) ($).*

Tap Room—New York's very first Austrian brewpub, with fresh lagers and pilsners on tap and a menu that indicates a seriousness about food that's rare in the microbrewery business. Goulash, spaetzle, Wiener schnitzel, and homemade sausages sound like the perfect accompaniments for beer. *3 W. 18th St. (691-7666). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

World Yacht—Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—over dinner. The luxury yacht boards at six, and sails from seven until ten. *Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (630-8100). (E) AE, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Café Centro—A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; there's inventive cooking going on here, and the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (818-1222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caviar Russe—The owners of this caviar bar and boutique are also importers, which means that you're getting your Beluga—and golden Osetra, and Sevruga—right from the source. The petite restaurant ensconced in a midtown townhouse will gladly feed you a spoonful or a more substantial meal, like a foie gras sandwich with Armagnac-soaked figs, or steak tartare with baby-beet-and-black-truffle salad. Afternoon tea and prix fixe menus also available. *538 Madison Ave., nr. 54th St. (980-5908). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cocktail Terrace at the Waldorf-Astoria—A convenient roost for a business breakfast or afternoon tea. At night, to accompany your cocktail, there's live piano music and the occasional fashion show. *301 Park Ave., at 50th St. (872-4818). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cucina & Co.—This market-style takeout shop and café is ideally situated in the lobby of the MetLife Building to catch the crush of commuters passing through Grand Central. Breakfast pastries, specialty sandwiches, baked pastas, steak-frites, and "Dinners for Two" keep the worker bees fueled throughout the day. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (682-2700). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Domingo—The opera star's very own Spanish kitchen right in midtown Manhattan. Downstairs there's a Castilian-style tapas bar; upstairs, a more formal dining room with dramatic skylights. Drop in for churros y chocolate, or make a full meal of the regional Spanish specialties such as paella Valenciana. *209 E. 49th St. (826-8269). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Fresco—It's a family affair: The Scottos, including broadcasting star Rosanna, have created a room where you'll find stars at your feet and hearty portions of modern Tuscan fare (rich homemade pasta, thin and crispy grilled pizza, chops and fish) on the table. *34 E. 52nd St. (935-3434). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Genki Sushi—Not your typical sushi bar but a moving conveyor belt with color-coded dishes that indicate the price of your lunch. This midtown branch is the first American outpost of an Asian megachain headquartered in Singapore. The restaurant, whose high-tech design incorporates a wall of exposed sound panels, Lucite chairs and stools, and a Warholian upholstery pattern, also offers bento boxes, vegetarian dishes, sashimi, and a varied sake selection. *9 E. 46th St. (983-5018). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Giambelli 50th Ristorante—Upscale Northern Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as carefully considered. *46 E. 50th St. (688-2760). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Lespinasse—Marie Antoinette, where are you? This ultra-formal dining room in the St. Regis Hotel—think Versailles and you get the rococo drift—is where you'll find Gray Kunz's inventive Franco-Oriental cooking. The $44 prix fixe at lunch is a gentle introduction to exactly what wonders chef Kunz can perform. *2 E. 55th St., in the St. Regis Hotel (339-6719). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Morton's of Chicago—This midwestern import has taken Manhattan by storm, winning converts with its tender double porterhouse and men's club charm. Hard to believe it's a chain. *551 Fifth Ave., at 45th St. (972-3315). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Naples 45 Ristorante e Pizzeria—This new, sprawling Italian restaurant and carry-out in the MetLife building serves authentic Neapolitan cuisine, including excellent thin-crust pizzas, baked to order by experienced pizza masters imported directly from Italy. Also try the twice-baked sandwiches and the wide array of wines by the glass. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (972-7001). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Park Restaurant—The plush surroundings in this new hotel-lobby restaurant are much fussier, but no more elegant, than the French-American fare concocted by ex–Lespinasse chef Fabrizzio Salerni. Sample dishes include porcini risotto, yellowfin-tuna tartare in wheat crust, steak-frites, and pan-roasted halibut in crispy rice paper. Piano music performed nightly, and cigar smokers have their own private lounge in which to indulge. *109 E. 56th St. (750-5656). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Shinbashi—After nearly a quarter of a century, this elegant Japanese restaurant is still an oasis in the frenzy of midtown. Owner Fumiko Hosoda offers a traditional menu of tempura, sukiyaki, teriyaki, and sushi, plus an array of chef's specialties. *280 Park Ave., at 48th St. (661-3915). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tatou—Gilded-plaster satyrs, cherubs, jazz onstage, and New American cuisine. Executive chef Neal Myers, formerly of Ben Benson's, transports his expertise with meats and creatively prepared seafood, like pepper-crusted tuna with winter squash and black vinegar sauce, and crab cakes accompanied by cole slaw rolls. Try something from the extensive raw-bar menu. *151 E. 50th St. (753-1144). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tropica—Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the salmon and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves the most imaginative seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. *200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (867-6767). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

American Festival Cafe—Lunch inside this glamorized eatery with rotating American folk art. Skaters in winter and a garden in the summer and early fall make for fierce window-seat competition. *Rocke-*

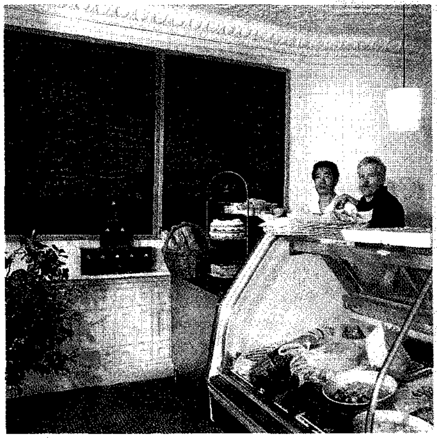
Takeout Dealers' Call

During the booming art market of the eighties, it was hard to utter the phrase "starving artist" with a straight face. Notorious, name-brand painters were busy sullying that romantic image with high-life dinners at downtown's posher restaurants. Some places, like TriBeCa's Barocco, functioned as a commissary for this suddenly flush cadre of gallery owners and arrivé artists. "We directed the restaurant toward the art world," says co-owner Danny Emerman. And the art world hungrily responded. When an article was published chronicling a typical week during the era, seven of New York's major gallery owners were sighted at Barocco the same night. The same *Wednesday* night.

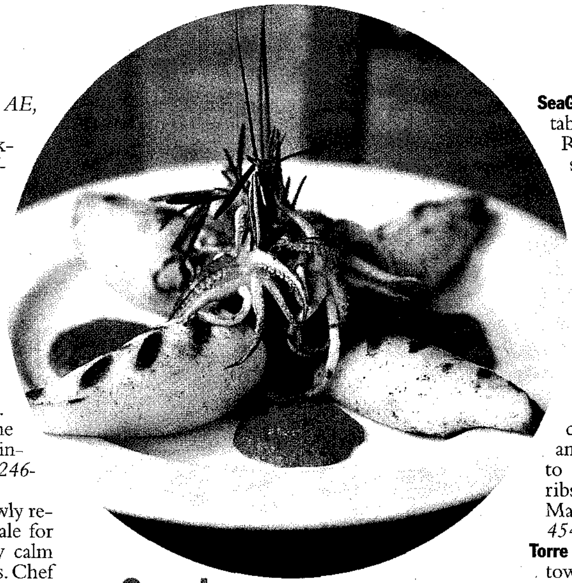
This symbiotic, sybaritic relationship has now produced Bottino, a takeout shop opening this week, with an adjacent restaurant opening in May. It's Emerman's first incursion into gallery-ridden but underserved west Chelsea. "We're starving over here," transplanted dealer Barbara Gladstone told him last year, cajoling Emerman to set up shop by promising financial help. "I know ten people off the top of my head who have the money." She rallied a half-dozen rival dealers to lend money to Emerman and his partner, chef Alessandro Prosperi—loans that will function as prepaid house accounts, enabling dealers to recoup their investment in espresso and charcuterie. (A curious inversion of the classic struggling artist who bartered canvases for free meals.)

Restaurants have long followed artists into undeveloped neighborhoods. A recent exhibit commemorating FOOD, the co-*operative restaurant and art project founded on* Prince Street in 1971, recalled an entirely unfamiliar SoHo, where dinner cost $3 and dealer Holly Solomon sponsored a performance inside a dumpster. Emerman sees something of that frontier feeling in his new digs, a precinct he calls "ideal for the art world—a neighborhood on the edge, both geographically and physically." Not that there are any pretenses these days in the art or food world. *Bottino*, after all, is Italian slang for "loot." (248 Tenth Avenue, near 24th Street; 206-6766.)

ROBIN RAISFELD



Photograph by Robert Wright.



Opening
Aqua Culture

Seafood stars at Mare Mare, where chef-partner Rob Miketa's daily catch includes shrimp-and-scallop-stuffed calamari with black rice, and a mariscada of steamed shellfish in an enriched broth. The landlubber options are equally ambitious, from lamb-sirloin bruschetta and beef with fried bananas to duck pappardelle and avocado cheesecake. (225 Columbus Avenue, near 70th Street; 579-3966.)

feller Plaza, 20 W. 50th St. (332-7620). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.

Ben Benson's Steak House—This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but the dining room is entirely devoted to the consumption of standards like lobsters, crab cakes, veal, and four cuts of steak. Free validated parking available. *123 W. 52nd St. (581-8888). (E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Broadway Joe—Located in a townhouse on Restaurant Row, this steakhouse serves a fourteen-ounce prime rib but also delivers fresh seafood and pasta for the omnivore. Hirschfeld caricatures cover the walls, so come find your NINAS while you dine. Discount dinner parking. Private parties. *315 W. 46th St. (246-6513). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

C2 at the China Club—The restaurant at the newly relocated China Club is conspicuously upscale for its Eighth Avenue address and surprisingly calm for its affiliation with the dance club upstairs. Chef Eban Ross has created an eclectic menu of Asian-influenced dishes like tuna-and-salmon tartare with daikon-hijiki slaw and braised lamb shank with maple-roasted acorn squash. *268 W. 47th St. (398-3800). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

China Regency—This Chinese-Japanese hybrid is located conveniently in midtown's hotel nexus. Try any of the noodle dishes or a sampling from the sushi bar. Private-party facilities are upstairs. *850 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (247-6440). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Christer's—Famous for its spectacular selection of salmon, this Scandinavian-inspired restaurant, designed by David Rockwell to resemble a colorful, cozy mountain lodge, is a great choice for contemporary renditions of seafood. Open Sundays. *145 W. 55th St. (974-7224). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cité—An extravagant French steakhouse, marble and pewter with blazing chandeliers, and a more affordable grill next door. *120 W. 51st St. (956-7100). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Da Rosina—A convenient pretheater location, specializing in homemade pasta and other casual Italian fare. Try the $19.98 prix fixe. *342 W. 46th St. (977-7373). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

"44"—Still the first stop for the officers of the Condé Nast empire. Deeply plush, windowless décor feels like the center of the Earth. Given the theatricality, surprisingly terrific food. *44 W. 44th St., in the Royalton (944-8844). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Frankie and Johnnie's Steakhouse—The oldest speakeasy in the city. In the same location in the theater district since 1926. Try the steaks and the chops. Yes, that was Tom Selleck. *269 W. 45th St. (997-9494). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

La Veranda—Northern Italian food. A popular spot in the theater district offering generous portions of fish, seafood, veal chops, and pasta. *163 W. 47th St. (391-0905). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Langan's—American cuisine in a clublike setting. Food ranges from Black Angus steaks to crab cakes and seafood. A trendy, well-heeled crowd at the much-frequented bar mixes with theatergoers in the dining room. *150 W. 47th St. (869-5482). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Lattanzi—Reliable Italian in a romantic garden. Go when there's no danger of a curtain rising or falling soon for special attention. *361 W. 46th St. (315-0980). (M) AE only.*

Le Bernardin—French-born Eric Ripert carries forth the quest of his predecessor, the late Gilbert Le Coze, for the world's most spectacular seafood. His ambitious signature dishes—scallops and foie gras with truffles, Spanish-style mackerel in Jerez vinegar, saddle of monkfish—have already won a very loyal following. *155 W. 51st St. (489-1515). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Martini's—Convenient for pre- and post-theater, with a buzzing year-round sidewalk café and chef Richard Krause's rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and wood-oven pizza. *810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (767-1717). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Molyvos—This interpretive Greek restaurant a stone's throw from Carnegie Hall is a large, stylishly rustic showcase for chef Jim Botsacos's serious Mediterranean menu. Sit at one of the tables up front for drinks and meze, or indulge larger appetites with dishes like grilled octopus, rabbit stifado, and vegetable dolmades. *871 Seventh Ave., nr. 55th St. (582-7500). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

No. 18—During the day, this sleekly decorated midtown nook caters to the office crowd with an express lunch for an unusually-good-for-the-neighborhood price of $13. At night, it morphs into an atmospheric martini bar and dining room where an eclectic variety of flavorful, well-seasoned American fare is served. The risotto is highly acclaimed, and the $25 pretheater dinner is a bargain. *18 W. 56th St. (489-1888). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Osteria del Circo—The restaurant of the moment, partly because of its excellent bloodlines (Sirio Maccioni's brood of charming sons runs the place) and partly because of its flavorful, homestyle Italian menu. Be sure to try anything created by proud mother (and food consultant) Mrs. Maccioni. *120 W. 55th St. (265-3636). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Pig and Whistle—This is midtown's notion of an Irish bar. A business clientele and a coming-and-going-to-the-theater crowd can find Irish specialties—both solid and liquid—here. *165 W. 47th St. (302-0112). (M) AE, MC, V.*

René Pujol—This theater-district oasis offers fine provincial French cooking in a sweet country-inn atmosphere. The conventionally familiar menu includes such specials as pan-seared duck breast with fruit chutney, steamed cod with coriander and ginger vinaigrette, and a salad of warm lobster, mesclun, and julienned vegetables. *321 W. 51st St. (246-3023). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse—A steak cooked in butter is the centerpiece of this successful upscale chain's take-no-prisoners march east across the country. Steak served in a series of connected, muted, and wood-paneled dining rooms. *148 W. 51st St. (245-9600). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

SeaGrill—Plush, cozy dining room opens to garden tables in the summer and offers a view of the Rockefeller Center skating rink in winter. The serving team does cartwheels toting crab cakes with two sauces, lobster salad with couscous in spicy lobster oil, and pepper-seared tuna steak at premium prices. *Rockefeller Plaza, 19 W. 49th St. (332-7610). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Stage Delicatessen—A landmark deli that serves gigantic sandwiches, every one of which is worth returning for. *834 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (245-7850). (I) AE, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain Restaurant & Saloon—The midtown offshoot of a SoHo rib joint, this much larger duplex restaurant serves an extensive southern barbecue menu. Tchotchkes can be had at the "general store" souvenir stand, and cigar smokers have their own room in which to exhale. The barbecued and hickory-smoked ribs have already made a major impression on Manhattan meat-lovers. *121 W. 45th St. (869-4545). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Torre di Pisa—David Rockwell designed this midtown Italian import as a surreal version of the Leaning Tower. Pane fritto con prosciutto di Parma and fagotto al funghi porcini are examples of the chef's updated Tuscan standards. A separate cigar/smoking room is available for private parties. *19 W. 44th St. (398-4400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Victor's Cafe 52—A venerable neighborhood haunt with tropical flair. Try the Cuban sandwich or the roast suckling pork. *236 W. 52nd St. (586-7714). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

57th–60th Streets

Contrapunto—Join the queue in this good-looking, updated restaurant that's added a roster of sophisticated meat and seafood dishes to its renowned pastas. *200 E. 60th St. (751-8616). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven—The country's entertainment-industry glitterati make themselves right at home in I. M. Pei's monumental dining room. Susan Weaver is one of the only working chefs to combine contemporary presentation and technique with classic Provençal on one plate. The weekend bar scene puts the concept-hotel bar scene to shame. *57 E. 57th St. (758-5700). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Les Célébrités—Plush and old-fashioned, this imposing dining room in the Essex House on Central Park South also happens to have a very fine kitchen. Dinner only. *160 Central Park So. (484-5113). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Manhattan Ocean Club—Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics and Brazilian-red-cherry floors. *57 W. 58th St. (371-7777). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Petrossian—This caviar emporium sells elegant meals—and fancy mementos—in an Art Deco setting with carved frosted glass, mink-trimmed banquettes, and period bronzes of lean flappers with leaner wolfhounds. New chef P.G. Gustafsson's menu offers the expected luxuries like roe, smoked fish, and foie gras, plus more elaborate meals like sautéed loin of Arctic venison and Dijon ginger-glazed rack of lamb. *182 W. 58th St. (245-2214). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Pondicherry—Although the entrance is situated directly next to the Paris Theatre, this new restaurant is somewhat sequestered down a flight of stairs. But the serene, comfortable environs are anything but cramped. Filmmaker Ismail Merchant is credited with contributing several recipes to chef Jean-Luc Kieffer's French-Indian menu. Some representative dishes include bouillabaisse, chicken biryani, Mauritius-style lamb, and grouper in banana leaf "papillote." *8 W. 58th St. (750-7474). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Rosa Mexicano—Did someone say "fresh-pomegranate margarita"? Yes, someone did. What's more, this spot prepares your guacamole tableside (a south-of-the-border hibachi?). Some of the tastier gourmet Mexican in the city. *1063 First Ave., at 58th St. (753-7407). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

San Domenico—Toques off to owner Tony May, who may have done more for the cause of serious Italian cooking in New York than any other single restaurateur. His dining room is formal, and the

Photograph by Steven Freeman.

food is wonderful. *240 Central Park So. (265-5959). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Two Rooms—You'd never expect it, but this landmark townhouse in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge is home to an extremely eclectic establishment, with colonial African décor in the skylit upstairs restaurant and a fireplace in the low-key downstairs lounge. Some of the dishes on chef Tom Harris's contemporary American menu include seared duck foie gras, lobster risotto, and crispy salmon in rice paper. *313 E. 58th St. (223-1886). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, East Side

Allora—This cozy restaurant appeals to neighborhood regulars looking for gently priced Italian standards like osso buco and linguine pescatore. For the fish lover, crab cakes and Dover sole would make an ideal order. *1321 First Ave., at 71st St. (570-0384). (I) AE.*

Andrusha—Just because you live uptown doesn't mean you need to succumb to the relentless Chinese-and-pasta delivery routine. This understated restaurant serves a variety of Eastern European dishes, from the familiar (beef Stroganoff, blini with caviar or smoked fish) to the less so (Czech roast duck, coulibiac of vegetables). *1370 Lexington Ave., nr. 90th St. (369-9374). (M) DC, MC, V.*

Baraonda—When the rest of the neighborhood is dark, this elegant Northern Italian hot spot is just starting to glow. The Rangers celebrated their Stanley Cup victory here, and yes, that was George Michael. *1439 Second Ave., at 75th St. (288-8555). (M) ($).*

The Boathouse—This is a glorious oasis in Central Park where you'll find an extensive American menu, featuring such enticing dishes as the "lobster Martini," house-smoked, pan-roasted swordfish, and grilled veal chop with truffled mashed potatoes. For postprandial excitement, rent a bicycle, a rowboat, or a gondola. Live jazz Monday through Thursday. *Central Park, nr. 72nd St. and Fifth Ave. (517-2233). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Club Macanudo—This plush, elegant shrine to cigar-smoking also offers, besides an astonishing selection of smokes, a sophisticated variety of edibles. The American menu, listing such offbeat items as warm lobster enchiladas and pork loin with coffee-barbecue sauce, takes inspiration from Latin and Caribbean cuisines. Jackets required. *26 E. 63rd St. (752-8200). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

El Pollo—This Peruvian chicken joint has stuck with its simple, minimal menu, to the benefit of this otherwise barren neighborhood. Potatoes come four ways, but you can't miss with the incredible curly fries. *1746 First Ave., nr. 90th St. (996-7810). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

JoJo—The grilled chicken with chickpea frites is a great dish. But then, Jean-Georges Vongerichten doesn't make many mistakes in this elegant, jewel-like dining room situated on two floors of an East Sixties townhouse. Lunch upstairs, overlooking the street, is especially lovely. *160 E. 64th St. (223-5656). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Mark's—Decked out like an English library, with plump, tasseled pillows to nest against. Fine East-West cooking and first-rate desserts. *25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (879-1864). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa City—Bobby Flay's casual uptown bastion of innovative southwestern fare offers a unique variety of quesadillas, plus heartier dishes like ribs with molasses-barbecue sauce and sweet-potato tamale with spinach. The bar attracts regulars with the house margarita, spiked with cactus-pear juice, and its selection of twenty brands of tequila. *1059 Third Ave., nr. 62nd St. (207-1919). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nino's—Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. *1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (988-0002). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Park Avenue Cafe—A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and off-duty get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the haute neighbors rapt with signature dishes like rack of lamb and his swordfish chop. *100 E. 63rd St. (644-1900). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *1596 Second Ave., nr. 83rd St. (585-3838). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Post House—Clubby and comfortable, this handsome dining room specializes in good quality and big portions. The peppery Cajun-style steak is a favorite, especially with a side order of French fries or onion rings. There are dishes with decidedly less cholesterol—poached salmon, say, or lemon chicken—but this isn't a place to watch your waistline. Seriously. *28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (935-2888). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Primavera—This elegant uptown restaurant serves sophisticated renditions of Northern Italian food, like baby eels with oil and garlic, and roasted baby goat. The comfortable wood-paneled room, lit with antique fixtures and filled with fresh flowers, brings a touch of luxury to the neighborhood. *1578 First Ave., nr. 82nd St. (861-8608). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, West Side

Gabriela's—Real Mexican food. Don't come here for bulging burritos, but for fragrant chicken soup, steamed tamales that taste like corn, and tender pork marinated in Seville orange juice and spices. Try the *licuados*, fruit shakes, and the *aguas frescas*, fresh-fruit drinks, to cool off. *685 Amsterdam Ave., at 93rd St. (961-0574). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Opening
Melting Pots

With its global menu and tri-level complex of bars and dining rooms, Nation is aspiring to detain the hordes of midtown office workers who typically flee the business district come quitting time. Chef David Schindel combines Asian, Cajun, Italian, and Caribbean seasonings in dishes like achiote-rubbed pork loin with tomatillo salsa fresca, lemongrass-and-honey-glazed salmon, and an avocado Caesar salad with grilled mango and spicy fried calamari. (12 West 45th Street; 391-8053.)

La Caridad—Chino-Latino soul food in a neighborhood notoriously devoid of restaurant personality. Mammoth portions, enormous lines. *2199 Broadway, at 78th St. (874-2780). (I) ($).*

M&G Diner—Dropping-off-the-bone short-rib sandwiches at the counter and low-key comfort. Jukebox is worth scanning. *383 W. 125th St. (864-7326). (I) ($).*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Picholine—Chef Terrance Brennan's French-Mediterranean cuisine is as beautiful to look at as it is delicious to eat. Try the risotto, smoky with tender duck and wild mushrooms, and velvety foie gras with peach coulis, and save room for a glass of port to accompany the amazingly rich and well-chosen cheese course. *35 W. 64th St. (724-8585). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Restaurant 222—Cozy and romantic, with the feel of a townhouse, Frank Valenza's top-rated New American West Sider is a luxurious surprise in a neighborhood nearly bereft of them. The $42.50 dinner prix fixe, available Sunday through Thursday, is a great deal. *222 W. 79th St. (799-0400). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sarabeth's—This New York institution is a homey place for upscale down-home food like chicken potpie and pancakes. It also offers a children's menu and a mouth-watering bakery counter, with homemade, award-winning jams and preserves. *423 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 80th St. (496-6280). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tavern on the Green—A must for your country cousin. This mazelike collection of dining rooms, each with a view of the park better than the previous one's, is worth cutting the hansom-cab ride short for. *Central Park at 67th St. (873-3200). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

West 63rd Street Steakhouse—Mahogany tables and red suede walls make this nice-ified steakhouse less stultifying than its midtown brethren. Twenty-foot ceilings allow for a spectacular view of Lincoln Center, and there are seafood and pasta for those who enjoy the company of a meat-eater. *44 W. 63rd St. (246-6363). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Brooklyn

Casa Pepe—Mexican and Spanish fare meld in this elegant restaurant, with garden dining in fine weather and a fireplace to warm up the gray days of winter. The seafood-heavy menu finds best expression in the zarzuela de mariscos, the paella marinera, and the tacos Vera Cruz. *114 Bay Ridge Ave. (718-833-8865). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Cucina—A labor of love. Northern Italian in an elegant and very well appointed room. Sensational antipasti. *256 Fifth Ave., nr. Garfield Pl. (718-230-0711). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Lundy Bros.—This restored landmark restaurant serves a wide-ranging menu of fish, pasta, chicken, and steak but specializes in lobster and other varieties of seafood. Don't miss the oyster bar or the reconstructed shore dinner. Sunday brunch buffet available. *1901 Emmons Ave. (718-743-0022). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Peter Luger's—Steak for one, steak for two, steak for four, and creamed spinach. Apply for your own house credit card, or bring cash. *178 Broadway, at Bedford Ave. (718-387-7400). (E) ($).*

The River Cafe—It's always worth crossing the bridge to sit waterside, enchanted by the skyline and a celebration of contemporary American cooking that predates the throng. Outdoor seating in season. *1 Water St. (718-522-5200). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Staten Island

Aesop's Tables—Arrive by ferry or bridge to this charming bistro and garden that serves inventive, bold Mediterranean fare with an emphasis on handpicked fresh seafood. *1233 Bay St., Rosebank (718-720-2005). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Photograph by Joe Fornabaio.

nightlife

Circus Diva...Chieftains...Leahy

Concerts

The Allman Brothers Band—The hirsute Southerners work their way through a month's worth of chicken-fried boogie. Some young Deadheads may be following Phish around, but judging from the trippy PEAKIN' AT THE BEACON posters around town, we're guessing this is the real show for misguided-youth (not to mention middle- and old-age) watching. 3/10–3/11, 3/13–3/15, and 3/17–3/18 at 8 P.M. *The Beacon Theatre, 2124 Broadway, at 75th St. (496-7070). $35–$50.*

Los Amigos Invisibles—On their new album, *The New Sound of the Venezuelan Gozadera*, these six South American disco aficionados work their way through party beats, sex-crazed lyrics, and plenty of raucous call-outs. Song title of the year has to go to "Disco Anal" (though we're unsure whether that's meant as in "-retentive" or what). 3/11 at 11 P.M. *The Greatest Bar on Earth, Windows on the World, 1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (524-7000). Free.*

Talent

One Size Fits All

Having conquered fickle Britain with his jazz-tinged drum-and-bass stylings, Roni Size brings Reprazent—his ensemble of turntable-spinners, knob-twiddlers, and beatmeisters—to Irving Plaza, March 12.

Photograph by Kevin Knight.

Neshama Carlebach & Inasense—Jewish folk soul, from a rabbi's rocking daughter. 3/11 at 8:30 P.M. *Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (840-2824). $18–$40.*

Warren Chiasson Quartet—The Canadian vibraphone master. 3/12 at 6:30 P.M. *The New School, 55 W. 13th St. (229-5488). $15.*

The Chieftains—Ireland's Celtic-music aristocrats have stayed current for 30 years by not keeping up with trends, opting instead for heftily trad sounds—replete with penny whistles, fiddles, and the like. With Leahy. 3/14 at 8 P.M. *Prudential Hall, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark, New Jersey (888-GO-NJPAC). $15–$47.* 3/17 at 8 P.M. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (721-6500). $25–$50.*

Circus Diva—See page 94. 3/12–3/14 at 8 P.M. *Roseland, 235 W. 52nd St. (307-7171). $40–$85.*

Harry Connick Jr.—Some have called him schmaltzy, but the guy's got talent and class, and on his new, orchestral album, *To See You: Love Ballads,* he's also got romance. Backed by a 30-piece orchestra, New Orleans's favorite Frank Sinatra worshiper should have no problem filling this big room. 3/9–3/10 at 8 P.M. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000). $29.50–$45.*

Gypsy Festival—Taraf de Haidouks and the Ökrös Folk Music Ensemble headline this refreshing antidote to the Gypsy Kings' windy bombast. 3/14 at 8 P.M. and 3/15 at 7 P.M. *Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400). $25.*

Martin Luther King Memorial Concert—An evening of spirituals, commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the civil-rights leader's death. Tenor John Aler headlines, along with Eugene Perry, Pamela Warrick-Smith, and Gail Blache-Gill. *Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Drive, bet. 120th and 122nd Sts. (870-6784). $15.*

Jackie Mason—The Borscht Belt's finest puts on a benefit for the Hebrom Fund. 3/10 at 8 P.M. *Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (840-2824). $75–$1,000.*

Primus—California's neo-prog trio mixes up goofy, cartoonish imagery with mind-bending bass pyrotechnics, polyrhythmic abandon, and Zappa-worthy guitar workouts. Too bad all that talent just goes into adolescent anthems like "Wynona's Big Brown Beaver." With Blink 182, Tha Alkaholiks, and the Aquabats. 3/16 at 6:45 P.M. *Roseland, 235 W. 52nd St. (307-7171). $25.*

Puff Daddy—The man is a force to be reckoned with. He can make a star, seemingly, out of anybody—from foxy Mary J. Blige to rough-'n'-ready Biggie Smalls to huggable Mase. And his latest high-profile act—himself—is nothing to sneeze at, either. Puff also understands that spectacle sells. Ergo, look for plenty of fireworks, swirling lights, booty-shaking, and crotch-grinding. With wildman Busta Rhymes and soul hysterics Dru Hill. 3/12 at 8 P.M. *Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. at 33rd St. (307-7171). Sold out.*

Frances Ruffelle—As *Les Miserables'* original Eponine, Ruffelle not only earned a Tony (in 1988): Thanks to her hollow-eyed image, she also did more to launch the gamine-waif craze than a thousand Calvin Klein ads put together. The pixieish chanteuse hasn't been to New York since her run in *Les Mis* ended, but now she's back to sing torch songs (from both pop *and* musical theater) from her second, self-titled album. (She also makes a stop at the appropriately boho Mercury Lounge, 3/16.) 3/12 and 3/14 at 11 P.M. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599). $15.*

Donna Summer—Giving New Yorkers a foretaste of her upcoming Broadway debut, everybody's favorite disco diva puts on a benefit for the Gay Men's Health Crisis. 3/16 at 8 P.M. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800). $50–$15,000.*

Clubland

Arlene Grocery—The Lower East Side's newish, hippish, and appealingly inexpensive (okay, free) rock and folk venue. 3/11: Kevin Salem. 3/13: Electronica cowboy Greg Garing mingles dark, burbling synth grooves with his dark, twanging country balladeering. 3/14: XTC worshiper David Yazbek writes bouncy pop that's eerily reminiscent of Andy Partridge's arch, intelligent musings. 3/18: Modern English (yes, *that* Modern English). *95 Stanton St. (358-1633). $.*

Bottom Line—A top-notch venue—with great sound, good sight lines, and pretty decent fries—given to rock, jazz, and folk artists of all stripes. 3/10: Stockton's Wing. 3/12: "What's That I Hear? The Songs of Phil Ochs" sees latter-day folkies paying homage to a forebear. Dave Buskin; Four Bitchin' Babes; Greg Greenway; John Wesley Harding; Dave Van Ronk. 3/13: Jules Shear, playing duets with Angie Hart, Jennifer Jackson, Mary Ramsey, Amy Rigby, Suzzy Roche, and Curtis Stigers. 3/14: Buster Poindexter. 3/17: Leahy. *15 W. 4th St. (228-7880).*

Brownies—Avenue A's divey post-college rock spot, with good tap beers, on-the-rise bands, and the occasional big name trying to keep a low profile. Cozy and congenial, even if you're not pierced. 3/10: Thin Lizard Dawn. 3/13: A Don Piper Situation, whose eponymous singer-guitarist has one of the greatest ears for a pop hook since Matthew Sweet. 3/16: Japanoise outfit Buffalo Daughter teams up with Swedish pop sensations Ray Wonder. *169 Ave. A, at 11th St. (420-8392). $.*

CBGB & OMFUG—Ground zero of punk's Stateside explosion and, twenty years later, still a smoking, flyer-strewn pit—in a good way. Dig the new, unscuzzy basement lounge. 3/13: An atypical night of dub, reggae, and latin sounds. John Brown's Body; La Rosa; Fiesta; the Nu Afrika Project. *315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052). $.*

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.—A downtown blueserie, comfortably down-home, with living-room couches behind the stage. Dedicated to bringing us the best and brightest from the midwestern blues capital. 3/13–3/14: Otis Rush. *73 Eighth Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (924-9755). $.*

Coney Island High—Originally a glam-trash revival hall, this two-level East Village funhouse now reflects the neighborhood's cultural diversity, with indie-rock and punk bands sharing the venue with some of the city's wackiest parties. 3/14: No Use for a Name. *15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959).*

The Cooler—The meatpacking district's subterranean, steel-corridored home to alternative rockers, avant-garde-jazz musicians, and mind-expanding D.J.'s. A sleekly refurbished meat locker with black light, moody atmosphere, and a Patti Smith photo. 3/12: Underground hip-hop collective Dujeous may be teenagers, but their deeply funky flow rivals that of any Boogie Down vet. 3/13: James Chance & the Contortions; the Defiant

Ground Rules:

In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Ones. 3/16: Phylr; B. Blush. *416 W. 14th St. (229-0785).*

Fez—Mingus fever and lush *faux*-Moroccan ambience make this the neo-boho place to be on Thursdays, when the mighty Mingus Big Band rocks the house, playing the works of the great, brawling jazz bassist with a freshness and authority rarely seen in jazz today. Hidden beneath the Time Cafe, Fez takes some ambition and assertiveness to access on a crowded night. Wednesday's year-old comedy revue "Stella" continues to deliver some of the finest young stand-up talent in the city. The Sun Ra Arkestra swings on in joyful idiosyncrasy Sunday nights through February and March. 3/10: Shana Young; Gary Negbaur; Bill Parsons. 3/11: Rufus Wainwright. 3/14: Amy Rigby; the Schramms; Graham Parker. 3/16: Sean Griffith; Jeb Loy Nichols. 3/17: Brenda Bergman. *Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (533-2680).*

Irving Plaza—A midsize bi-level rock venue with moody chandeliers and a sort of haunted-bordello look. It's a bit of a crush near the stage, but there's an amiable bar, 119, right around the corner for a preshow aperitif. "Savoy Sundays" are weekly swingfests of ballroom dancing. 3/12: Last year, Britain's music Establishment awarded its prestigious Mercury Prize to *Newforms*, Roni Size's double-CD drum-and-bass opus. Now the impresario, along with his outfit Reprazent, is trying to bring his significant charms to bear on Americans. 3/14: In Detroit, the Insane Clown Posse are bigger than Jesus—or at least bigger than Jerry Springer. They can command their puerile hordes to threaten critics, put on scary blackface, and generally act like fools. Presumably, reserved New Yorkers will simply look on in disbelief. 3/16–3/17: Tuam, Ireland's Saw Doctors are the stuff of popular legend. Even here in America, their shows are frequented by flag-draped soccer fans, drunken brawlers, and other Gaelic types. So what if their music is mostly undistinguished barroom shoutalongs? *17 Irving Pl. (777-6800).*

Knitting Factory—The Disneyland of downtown music, with three floors, two stages, two microbrew-bearing bars, and some of the biggest names in now music. 3/10: Kamikaze Ground Crew, with Steven Bernstein. 3/11: Putamayo World Music Presents "Women of Spirit." 3/12: Matt Keating; Heather Eatman; Joseph Arthur. 3/13: David Torn, Elliot Sharp, and Vernon Reid; Mike Patton. 3/14: John Zorn, Mike Patton, and Ikue Mori. 3/15: Badal Roy and Steve Turre; Miya Masaoka, Oliver Lake, Andrew Cyrille, and Reggie Workman. 3/16: Joseph Bowie's Funkshop. *74 Leonard St., bet. Broadway and Church St. (219-3055).*

Life—Okay, we give. It *is* the only hip place on Bleecker Street, even if the doormen can get a little tough on those they deem unworthy. What bouncers aren't? Wednesday night's "Get a Life" rock-and-roll dance party keeps the trash-rockers and the glamourpusses clamoring for more. *158 Bleecker St. (420-1999).*

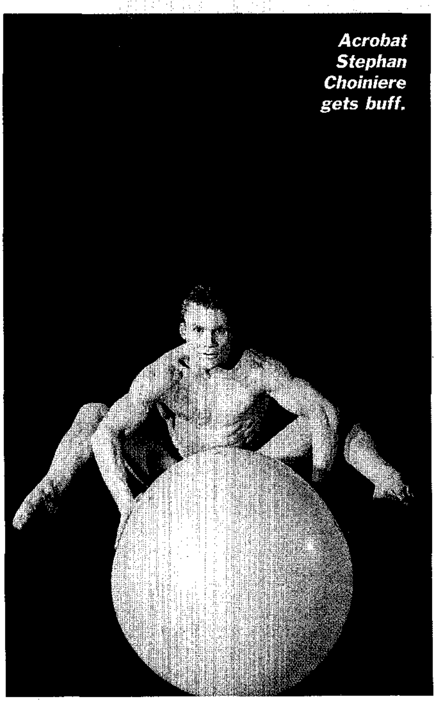
Louisiana Community Bar and Grill—Weird neighborhood in which to label anything "community," but the joint books some surprisingly good blues, jazz, and country acts. Every Saturday in March, the Harlem Jazz Legends swing on in octogenarian glory. 3/11: Full Swing. 3/13: Noo Voo Doo. 3/14: Irving Louis Lattin. *622 Broadway, bet. Houston and Bleecker Sts. (460-9633).*

Manny's Car Wash—A little Chicago on the Upper East Side. Mondays, beware salivating yuppie swells here for ladies' night. Every Sunday, it's Manny's World Famous Blues. 3/12–3/14: Walter Wolfman Washington. *1558 Third Ave., bet. 87th and 88th Sts. (369-BLUES).*

Mercury Lounge—Once a headstone parlor, now one of the city's hippest and most congenial music spots, hosting rock and country artists groomed for the more au courant time slots of MTV. 3/10: Candy Butchers. 3/11: Pushstars. 3/12: The Veldt. 3/13: Peter Salett. 3/14: Cheri Knight. 3/16: Frances Rufelle (see "Concerts" listing); Individual Fruit Pie. *217 E. Houston St. (260-4700).*

Performance
Swingers' Circus

You've got to wonder why the circus has never been embraced by the Chelsea-boy set. It's got rhinestone costumes, lithe bodies, and an air of vaguely illicit roguishness—plus more flash, spectacle, and high drama than a Vegas floor show. Maybe, you muse, without preschoolers in the house, those undoubtedly bitter clowns would let fly with sarcasm, the contortionists would show off tricks they normally reserve for the bedroom, and the ringmaster's campy theatrics would be elevated to, well, even campier theatrics. At Circus Diva (Roseland, March 12 through 14), such ruminations may well be answered. Though the 21-and-over show is billed as the world's first gay circus, producer Mitch Weiss notes that its real focus is "celebrating the human body." Circus Diva draws its 26 acrobats, clowns, and sideshow acts from such big-name big tops as Ringling Bros., Cirque du Soleil, and the Big Apple Circus. But it is here at Roseland, Weiss hints, that we'll see what the performers really have to offer: "These are physical people who are exhibitionists," he says. In the unlikely event a bunch of near-naked acrobats don't satisfy your jones for spectacle, there are also adult-humor Bozos, a drag-queen ringmaster, and a post-performance dance party. "When this thing is over," says Weiss, "we want everybody—gay, straight, or whatever—to go home and have sex with their partner." (See "Concerts" listings for dates, as it were, and prices.) ETHAN SMITH



Acrobat Stephan Choiniere gets buff.

Photograph by Terence Notario.

Rodeo Bar—A surprisingly untacky honky-tonk in Kips Bay—with gas-station signs, mounted longhorns, and peanuts in the shells. Its urban rockabillies tend to be pierced and dyed, and its stage occasionally hosts greats like Austin legend Ronnie Dawson, Joe Ely, and Otis Blackwell, all past visitors. 3/12: 5 Chinese Brothers. 3/13: The Niagaras. 3/17: The Dan Zanes Band. *375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500).*

S.O.B.'s—The city's premier world-music venue, presenting many acts that could fill stadia back home. Most nights, sets at 10 and midnight. 3/10: Tony Rebel. 3/11–3/13: Tenor giant Gato Barbieri. 3/14: Samba Novo. 3/16: Joe Cuba and Johnny Colon. 3/17: The Meditations. *204 Varick St. (243-4940).*

Tramps—One of the city's better venues for great roots music and happening indie rock, Tramps eschews high concept for straightforward presentation. Avoid the neck-craning mid-stage column by arriving early. 3/11 and 3/14: Whether he's honky-tonking or getting Western-swing mellow, Willie Nelson is an American musical treasure. His recent jazzy forays into two-step swing have been as rewarding as anything in his long and storied career. 3/12: Unwound; Bunny Foot Charm. 3/13: Del McCoury Band; Peter Rowan & the Greengrass Gringos. 3/17: Bela Fleck & the Flecktones. *51 W. 21st St. (727-7788).*

Wetlands—A groovy club-kid activist hang with neo-hippie atmosphere and far-flung musical guests. N.B.: Tuesday night is (Grateful) Dead Night. Sunday is "Fastbreak," a jungle-techno-hip-hop-"Kung-fu breakbeat" extravaganza. 3/11: Thirtieth-anniversary revival of *Hair. 161 Hudson St. (966-5244).*

Jazz

Birdland—More comfortable than the Blue Note, swankier than the Vanguard, and proof that jazz is alive and well in midtown, this classy boîte serves up some fine southern cuisine along with its first-rate lineup. Every Monday night, the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Every Friday, the Lew Anderson Big Band swings from 5:30 to 7:30. 3/10: The Duke Ellington Orchestra. 3/11: Ralph Irrizary & Timbalaye. 3/12–3/14: Hilton Ruiz Quartet. 3/15: Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M. *315 W. 44th St. (581-3080).*

Blue Note—With a first-rate sound system and a decent view from every seat in the house, the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30 P.M. 3/10–3/15: Celia Cruz & Tito Puente. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592).*

Dharma—An elegant little gem of a club, serving funky jazz on the historic shopping thoroughfare—just don't pay retail. 3/12: Duende. 3/16: Eric Alexander Quartet. 3/19: Duende. 3/20–3/21: Cecil Payne. 3/23: Eric Alexander Quartet. 3/24: Groove Collective. 3/27–3/28: Kurt Rosenwinkel Group. 3/30: Eric Alexander Quartet. 3/31: Groove Collective. *174 Orchard St. (780-0313).*

Iridium—Merlot, the artfully wacky restaurant across from Lincoln Center, hosts some formidable jazz comers in its cozy basement, along with the occasional legend. Monday nights, the Les Paul Trio holds office hours. 3/10–3/15: Benny Golson quintet. Sets at 8:30 and 10:30 Sun.–Thurs., with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. *44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (582-2121).*

"Jazz at Noon"—East midtown's long-running, Friday-afternoon jam session—where Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, and Elvin Jones have all been visiting scholars—returns for its thirty-third season, with the usual high-caliber house band. Noon–2:30 P.M. 3/13: George Masso. $5 cover. *San Martin Restaurant, 143 E. 49th St. (832-0888).*

The Jazz Standard—Midtown south's newest, biggest, and happeningest hangout for hard-boppers and the men and women who love them. You can't hear the bands from the swanky first-floor restaurant, but the basement club's modified menu should more than suffice. 3/10–3/12: The Cecilia Smith Quartet. 3/13–3/15: The Valerie Capers

Quartet. Sets Sun., Tues.–Thurs. at 8 P.M. and 10 P.M., Fri. and Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and midnight; $10–$15 cover on weekdays, $15–$20 cover on Fri. and Sat. *116 E. 27th St. (576-2232).*

Knickerbocker Bar & Grill—A wood-paneled and brass-railed restaurant with Old New York ambience and excellent—occasionally legendary—pianists. 3/11–3/14: Mulgrew Miller & Ron Carter. *33 University Pl. (228-8490).*

Red Blazer—Reopened in a new spot, the famed Theater District jazzerie continues to offer fine sounds. Monday: Rick Hardeman and his New Orleans Jazz All Stars. Tuesday: Kelly Freizin Jazz Band. Wednesday: Sunny Daniels Swing All Stars. Thursday: Stan Rubin and His Swing Sextet. Friday: Sam Ulando and the Bourbon Street Jazz Band. Saturday: Bob Cantwell and the Stompers. *32 W. 37th St. (262-3112).*

Showman's Cafe—Harlem's subtly wonderful jazz club, where you can always get a table and the jukebox is one of the best in the city. Every Thursday, sixties organ great Reuben Wilson leads his heady trio. Sets at 10 P.M., midnight, and 2 A.M. No cover; two-drink minimum. *2321 Eighth Ave., bet. 124th and 125th Sts. (864-8941). $.*

Small's—Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. Every Sunday, the Jazz Composers Forum, followed by the Across Seventh Street Septet. Every Monday, Jason Lindner's youthful, Ellington-meets-Mingus big band. Tuesdays, cerebral and atmospheric guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel leads his quartet. Shows start at 10 P.M. *183 W. 10th St. (929-7565). $.*

Sweet Basil—An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M., with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. 3/17–3/22: Michele Rosewoman. *88 Seventh Ave. So., at Bleecker St. (242-1785).*

Tavern on the Green—A somewhat overwrought restaurant in a touristy Central Park rest stop, the Tavern's Chestnut Room is still a top-flight jazz club—with excellent sound and a full roster of stars. 3/10–3/15: Paul Katz. *Central Park at W. 67th St. (873-3200).*

Village Vanguard—Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club, and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world. Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30 P.M. 3/10–3/15: Brad Mehldau Trio. *178 Seventh Ave. So., at W. 11th St. (255-4037). $.*

Zinno—A pretty Italian restaurant with a tiny piano on its awning, Zinno is more dining spot than jazz club, though its musical guests are often pleasant surprises. Shows Mon.–Sat. at 8 P.M. *126 W. 13th St. (924-5182).*

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club—*Animal House* ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Sundays: "All Star Comedy." Mondays: Open-mike night hosted by David J. Tuesdays–Thursdays, shows at 9:30 P.M. Fridays and Saturdays, the club promises "the country's top comedians," with shows at 8, 10, and midnight. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-1000).*

Carolines Comedy Club—In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. Mondays and Tuesdays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. 3/11: Janeane Garofalo stars in the all-femme Twistfest. 3/12–3/16: Mario Cantone. *1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). $12.50–$18.50; two-drink minimum.*

Catch a Rising Star—The high-class variety showplace has broadened its focus from straight stand-up to a mix of sketch and alternative comedy, theater, and musical performances. Friday's "The Big Bad Music Show" explores that riskiest of all entertainment territory, humor rock. Shows Tues. at 8:30 P.M.; Wed. and Thurs. at 9 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 9 and 11 P.M. *253 W. 28th St. (244-3005).*

Chicago City Limits—The long-running and much-ballyhooed troupe performing its latest, "@ChicagoCityLimits.comedy." Shows Wed.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M., Fri.–Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. $20 cover. *Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. (888-LAFF).*

Comedy Cellar—A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 8:30 P.M., 10:15 P.M., and midnight; and Sun.–Thurs. at 9 P.M. 3/9–3/15: Collin Quinn; Maceo; Dave Attell; Vic Henley; Jim Norton; Rick Crom. *117 MacDougal St. (254-3480).*

Comic Strip—Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. *1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (861-9386).*

Dangerfield's—Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11:15 P.M.; Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45 P.M. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat., $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. 3/9–3/15: Ben Creed; Rich Vos; Al Romero. *1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (593-1650).*

Gotham—An elegant, trendy, and palatial comedy spot in the Flatiron district. Shows Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M.; Fri. at 9 and 11 P.M., and Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. Cover is $12 Fri. and Sat., $8 on weeknights; two-drink minimum. 3/13–3/14: Tom Shillve; Billy Jaye; Jim Gaffigan. *34 W. 22nd St. (367-9000).*

New York Comedy Club—Every Friday, the NYCC presents "New York's Best African-American and Latino Comics." Every Wednesday and Thursday, there's sketch comedy at 7 P.M. Shows Mon.–Fri. at 9, with extra shows Fri. at 7 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 6, 7:30, 9:30, and 11:45 P.M. *241 E. 24th St. (696-5233).*

Stand-up New York—Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Cover is $7–$12. 3/13–3/14: Joe Matarese; Andrés Fernandez; J. R. Havlan. Shows Sun.–Thurs. at 7; Fri.–Sat. at 7, 9, and 11:30 P.M. *236 W. 78th St. (595-0850).*

Cabaret

Asti—Singing-waiter frolics, with an emphasis on opera and operetta, are the keynote of this Village landmark. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105).*

Bemelmans Bar—Peter Mintun plays piano and sings standards. $10 music charge; no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Carlyle—Starting 3/10, Dixie Carter, Tuesday–Saturday. Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band. Sets at 8:45 and 10:45 P.M. $50 ($25 for Davis's late, Woody-free set); no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Pierre—Singer-pianist Kathleen Landis. $12 minimum; jacket and tie required. *Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (940-8195).*

Danny's Skylight Room—Thursday–Sunday, through March, Blossom Dearie's back in town. Every Monday and Tuesday, Ronny Whyte is in the piano bar. $6–$15, plus $10 minimum. *346 W. 46th St. (265-8130).*

Don't Tell Mama—Fridays through April: Jamie deRoy and friends (3/13, those friends include Baby Jane Dexter and Eric Michael Gillett). 3/10 and 3/18: Scott Coulter's "Remember the Magic." Also 3/13: Cabaret satirists Max and Maxine, with musical director Shecky Sheckenstein. $10–$15 cover; two-drink minimum. *343 W. 46th St. (757-0788). $.*

Eighty-Eight's—A West Village venue whose unassuming façade conceals a top-notch little theater within. Sundays, Rohn Seykell continues his wildly popular run. 3/10: Steve Hayes and Tom Cayler. $15 cover; two-drink minimum. *228 W. 10th St. (924-0088).*

FireBird Café—The theater district's newest post-show snuggery. 3/12–4/4: Fascinating Aida. Tues.–Thurs., sets at 9 P.M. Fri. and Sat., sets at 9 and 11 P.M. $30 cover; two-drink minimum. *363 W. 46th St. (586-0244).*

Judys Restaurant and Cabaret—Every Saturday, Judy Kreston and David Lahm perform "My One and Only Love"—a romance-themed collection of standards and originals. Sets at 9 P.M. $15 cover; $10 minimum. *49 W. 44th St. (764-8930).*

Rainbow and Stars—Romance, prewar charm, and wood paneling, hundreds of feet above midtown. Tues.–Sat. at 8:30 and 11 P.M.; seating for dinner is at 6:30 P.M. Through 3/28: "Rhythm on the Rainbow . . . The Hot Harmonies of the Boswell Sisters." *30 Rockefeller Plaza, 65th floor (632-5000).*

Bars

B. Bar—Formerly known as the Bowery Bar, this boxy ex–gas station cloisters the giddy hipsters within a very cool lounge inspired by a fifties-era Miami Holiday Inn. Monday nights, trombonist Craig Harris leads a rotating cast of top-notch jazz heads through some distinctly non-loungey changes. *358 Bowery, at 4th St. (475-2220).*

Café Noir—A North African hideaway straight out of *Casablanca*, Noir serves some of the finest sangria, grilled calamari, and cheese plates you'll find in SoHo. The action is best in summer, when the big picture windows bring street life right into the bar, but the place oozes decadent charm year-round. *32 Grand St. (431-7910).*

Performance

Get Jiggy With It

Between Saint Paddy's Day sets at the Bottom Line, Celtic new jacks Leahy (left) hustle up to Avery Fisher Hall, where they open for the Emerald Isle's venerable Chieftains (right). (See "Concerts" and "Clubland" for March 17.)

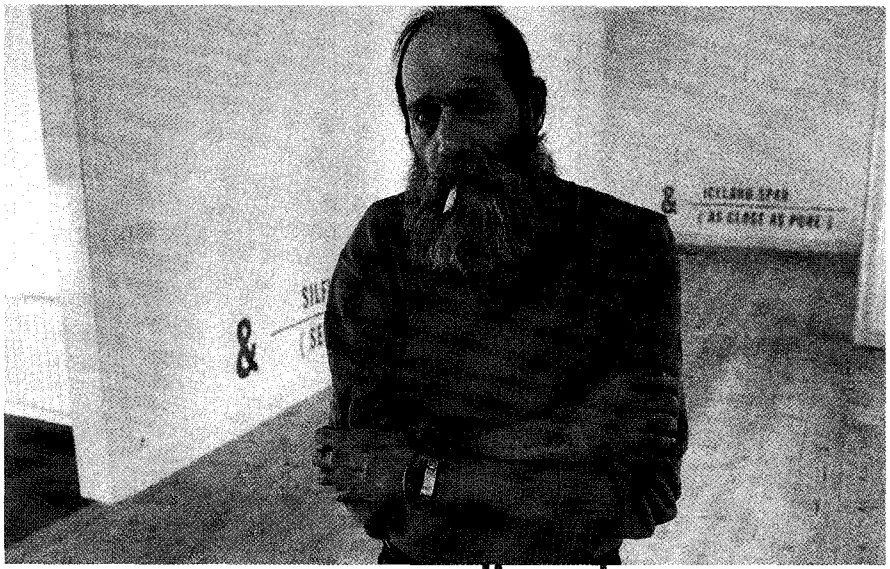
Photographs: left to right, Christoph Strube; Ian Bradshaw.

the mix

St. Patrick's Day Doings...Mary Karr & Frank McCourt

John Leonard's TV Notes

Dalziel and Pascoe: Exit Lines (3/10; 9 to 11 P.M.; A&E) launches the third season of Reginald Hill's odd-couple British police-detective series with the dead bodies of two old men, a wayward waitress, a country estate and a military camp both full of secrets, trouble at home for dapper Pascoe with his in-laws, and bibulous Dalziel on suspension, shooting at grouse and bagging heroin. I've said here before that, with Warren Clarke and Colin Buchanan, this series is perfectly cast, and the scripts can be counted on to be more literate than we are.



Happening

What's the Idea?

After Pop Art and minimalism, conceptual art—which flowered in the sixties and questioned the whole premise of the art object as we knew it—seemed the next logical step. Joseph Kosuth, Dan Graham, and Lawrence Weiner (above) are among the panelists who will gather on March 12 at the School of Visual Arts to consider "When Art Became Ideas: Conceptualists Look Back at the Late 60s and Early 70s." (See listings.)

Photograph by Einar Falur Ingólfsson.

Roger Miller Remembered (3/10; 9 to 11 P.M.; TNN) looks back at the songwriter who made country music hip, with Willie Nelson, Reba McEntire, Kris Kristofferson, Kathy Mattea, Dwight Yoakum, Jessi Colter, Lyle Lovett, Ray Price, Waylon Jennings, Trisha Yearwood, the Mavericks, and the Fisk Jubilee Singers telling funny stories about their old friend and performing such songs as "Dang Me," "England Swings," "Walkin' in the Sunshine" and of course "King of the Road." John Goodman brings down the Grand Ole Opry House with a reprise of his role as Huck Finn's father in Miller's hit Broadway musical *Big River,* and if you don't fall in love with Reba McEntire after hearing her rendition of "Husbands and Wives," I'd rather not know you.

That's Life (starting 3/10; 9:30 to 10 P.M.; ABC) is yet another TV sitcom that finds the borough of Queens is hilarious. Or at least working-class. So stand-up comic Gerry Red Wilson, impersonating a supermarket meat manager (the stuff comes already "butched"), wants to turn his upstairs duplex into a "Guy Town" for drinking beer and watching football, except that Kellie Overbey, impersonating his chirpy domestic goddess and slave girl of a wife, needs the space for her stuck-up Manhattan sister, who's just been dumped by her wayward husband, and instead of *A Streetcar Named Desire* we get Jackie Gleason's bus in *The Honeymooners,* plus a JETS sweatshirt, and bottled-water jokes. From writer-producers who formerly wrote for Roseanne: not good enough.

Significant Others (starting 3/11; 9 to 10 P.M.; Fox) asks us to care about twentysomething slackers fighting off adulthood in L.A. The odd thing is, I'm tempted. In this latest swatch of psychic yard goods from Christopher Keyser and Amy Lippman, the creators of *Party of Five,* Campbell (Eion Bailey), Nell (Jennifer Garner) and Henry (Scott Bairstow) manage to be feckless without ever quite belonging to a Bret Easton Ellis novel. Imagine *My So-Called Relativity.* Along with their puppy loves and Oedipal hangups, commitment issues and lifestyle problems, relatives and buddies, we contemplate the fraught worlds of publishing, public relations, videos, rock music, online pornography, bra manufacture, and self-cleaning kitty-litter boxes. They are very white, as they should be, but references are actually made to Franz Kafka, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Charles Bukowski—and in next week's second installment, funnier than the first, they are even made to feel ashamed of themselves at a birthday party for a neighbor with AIDS.

Two Guys, a Girl and a Pizza Place (3/11; 9:30 to 10 P.M.; ABC) is, astonishingly, also about a twentysomething threesome since high school, from the Danny Jacobson who gave us Mad About You. Pre-bonded buddies Berg (Ryan Reynolds) and Pete (Richard Ruccolo) are grad students in Boston who share an apartment and deliver pies for a Beacon Street pizzeria; Sharon (Traylor Howard) is their upstairs food-buying neighbor and preferred third wheel at Celtics games who sells chemicals for a living ("One more client for me, one less species of bird"). Julius Carry runs the pizza place, where David Ogden Stiers is a regular customer who, like Ronald Reagan, confuses his own life with what he's seen in movies and on television. There are Meg Ryan, Unabomber, pancake, and Marlon Brando jokes, not to mention, because Berg tests experimental medical products, a truth-serum asthma spray and a pair of talking trainer shoes. Well, I laughed.

M*A*S*H, Tootsie & God: A Tribute to Larry Gelbart (3/20; 8 to 9:30 P.M; Channel 13) lets Alan Alda, Mel Brooks, Red Buttons, Jack Paar, and Carl Reiner do some of the talking, while a Writers Guild audience looks at clips from the movies and the television series; and Ed Asner, Wayne Knight, Helen Shaver, Jeffrey Tambor, and René Auberjonois read from the plays; and Bill Maher is politically incorrect as the master of risible ceremonies. But Gelbart, naturally, has the last word, as well as a good many in between: "I was a little disappointed that all the banks and schools are open today."

One Hot Summer Night (3/12; 9 to 11 P.M.; ABC) tries hard to be *noir,* with *Baywatch* beach bunny Erika Eleniak as the trophy wife of irascible sports tycoon Barry Bostwick. Erika just happens to be sleeping with Brian Wimmer when Barry's wasted by a hit-man, Tobin Bell, who must have been paid by someone to do it, though neither Stephen Macht, Erika's defense attorney, nor Christopher Darden, a laid-back L.A. homicide detective, can seem to decide whom. You heard right: Darden, late of the O.J. trial, makes his first starring-role entertainment-television appearance, and he's not bad. He is also most of what this movie's got going for it except for a way with names (Mingus, Coop De Ville, Abel Ganz) and a surprise pretzel twist in romantic Bavaria.

Nothing Sacred (3/14; 9 to 10 P.M.; ABC), in an episode entitled "The Coldest Night of the Year," tells us more than we may want to know about Father Ray's dysfunctional family—an abusive, recovering-alcoholic, former fire chief father (John Mahoney), a resentful, drug-addicted, ex-con older brother (Jeff Kober), and a put-upon-until-she's-had-it gray-haired mom (Fionnula Flanagan) who moves in to Father Ray's church with the rest of the homeless. We also learn a bit more about the latest addition to the cast, Jennifer Beals. And Brad Sullivan's Father Leo delivers a terrific sermon about those wounds into which we are supposed to put our hands.

A Father for Brittany (3/15; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS) has the wit to cast professional slacker Andrew McCarthy (*St. Elmo's Fire, Pretty in Pink, Less Than Zero, Weekend at Bernie's*) as the insouciant young husband of a very blonde Teri Polo who would rather fix cars and play softball and golf than face up to his family responsibilities, and who will have to grow up fast, with the help of a surprisingly supportive Shirley Knight, in order to win back the baby he and Teri had decided to adopt just before she learned she was about to die from cancer. The issue here is the legal prejudice against men in single-parent adoptions. The pleasure, besides Michael Learned as a nurturing but ambivalent social worker, is in seeing typecast McCarthy genuinely mature.

Radio Highlights

New York & Company—Weekdays at 2 p.m. 3/10: Deborah Tannen on *The Argument Culture;* Jane Debevoise on the Guggenheim's "China 5,000 Years;" Leslie Cockburn on *Looking for Trouble.* 3/11: Patti Lupone on "The Old Neighborhood;" Alice McDermott on *Charming Billy;* Rosemary L. Bray on *Unafraid of the Dark;* Brigitte Rouan on "Post Coitum." 3/12: Rick Brookhiser; Richard Whelan; Indira Ganesan on *Inheritance;* Gretchen Cryer and David Jones. Leonard Lopate is the host. WNYC AM; 820.

The Texaco-Metropolitan Opera—3/14 at 1:30 P.M.: Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore.* With conductor Maurizio Benini, Ruth Ann Swenson, Luciano Pavarotti, Roberto de Candia, Paul Plishka. WQXR, 96.3 FM.

The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show—Sundays at 8 P.M. 3/15: The guest is Joseph Finder, author of *High Crimes.* WNWK, 105.9 FM.

The Written Word

Larry King—3/10 at 8 P.M.: Discusses *Future Talk.* 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $18.

"Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter"—3/10 at 6:30 P.M. Author Adeline Yen Mah reads from her memoir and discusses her life. Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA); $10.

Aharon Appelfeld—3/10 at 7:30 P.M.: The Israeli novelist reads from *The Iron Tracks.* Proshansky Auditorium, CUNY Graduate School, 33 W. 42nd St. (642-2684); free.

Donald Antrim and Maria Flook—3/15 at 7 P.M.: Reading from recent work. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (358-1935); free.

25th Annual PEN Prison Writers Award Ceremony—3/11 at 6:30 P.M.: Featuring Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking.* Tishman Auditorium, the New School, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5600); free.

Nikki Giovanni and Walter Mosley—3/12 at 7 P.M.: A joint reading at P.S. 191 to raise money for the Chancellor's Literacy Campaign. 210 W. 61st St. (678-2810); free.

Mary Karr and Frank McCourt—3/16 at 8 P.M.: The authors read from *The Liars' Club* and *Angela's Ashes,* respectively. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $12.

"Passwords: Jean Valentine on Osip Mandelstam"—3/10 at 7 P.M.: With readings in Russian by Alex Cigale. Poets House, 72 Spring St. (431-7920); $7.

Patrick McGrath, Barry Yourgrau, Joanna Torrey—3/13 at 8: Reading from their work at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (475-3424); free, jackets required.

Richard Howard—3/11 at 6 P.M.: Reading from his work. Room 510, the New School, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5600); $5.

George Plimpton—3/10 at 7:30 P.M.: On Truman Capote. Limbo, 47 Ave. A, between 3rd and 4th Sts. (477-5271); free.

George Custen—3/11 at 7 P.M.: On *Twentieth Century Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck and the Culture of Hollywood.* Barnes & Noble, 1972 Broadway, at 66th St. (595-6859); free.

Lectures and Panels

"Emerging Voices 1998"—3/12 at 6:30 P.M.: Architects Julie Snow of Minneapolis and Michael Gabellini of New York discuss their work. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (753-1722); $7.

"Asia's Currency Crisis: Global Implications"—3/10 at 8 A.M.: A breakfast panel discussion of how Asia's economic turmoil may affect other emerging markets. Council of the Americas, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (628-3200); $60.

"Poverty Is No Virtue, Wealth No Evil: Biblical Perspectives on Money"—3/10 at 8 P.M.: With Dr. David Sperling of Hebrew Union College. The Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, at 122nd St. (678-8950); $15.

"New York: State of the Eagle"—3/12 at 6 P.M.: A slide lecture with Peter Nye on the state of the eagle in our state. Ames Auditorium, 111 E. 59th St. (691-7482); free.

"When Art Became Ideas"—3/12 at 8 P.M.: A symposium on the development of conceptual art, with Robert Barry, Dan Graham, Joseph Kosuth, Adrian Piper, Lawrence Weiner, and Robert C. Morgan. SVA Amphitheatre, 209 E. 23rd St. (592-2010); free.

An Evening With David Henry Hwang—3/17 at 6:30 P.M.: The author of *M. Butterfly* talks about his new play, *Golden Child.* Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA); $15.

"Watermark: Vietnamese American Poetry and Prose"—3/18 at 6:30 P.M.: Monique T.D. Truong moderates a panel on the development of a new generation of writers. With readings from a new anthology of work by Mong Lan, Truong Tran, and others. Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA); $7.

Lucie Arnaz—3/11 at 6 P.M.: A lecture and viewing of the uncut "Lucy Takes a Cruise to Havana" episode of *I Love Lucy* with the daughter of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. The Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6600); $10.

"Discover Your Dream Career"—3/15 at 10 A.M.: An opportunity to explore your aspirations and talents in order to achieve professional satisfaction. The Sol Goldman YM-YWHA of the Educational Alliance, 344 E. 14th St. (780-0800); $90.

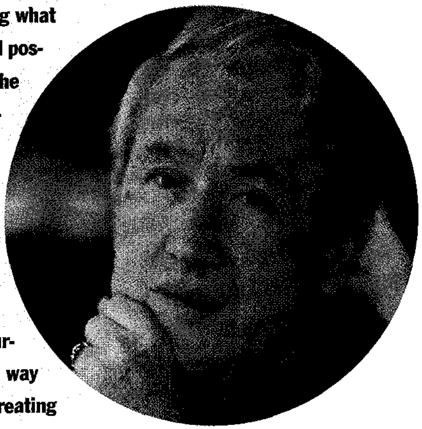
Robert De Niro at the Actors Studio—3/30 at 7:30 P.M.: An in-depth interview about the actor's life and career. The New School, Tishman Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5859); $245 for seven sessions with various actors.

Happening

Enough About Me

Even the most rapacious memoir-gobbler (a species never better fed than in the nineties) might be wondering what new revelations Mary Karr and Frank McCourt could possibly dish up when the two discuss "Literature and the Memoir" at the 92nd Street Y on March 16. Karr and McCourt are, of course, the respective authors of *The Liars' Club* and *Angela's Ashes*, two books whose wild success has made them, for better or worse, totems of the memoir movement. The writers' mass exposure, though—together they've sold almost 2 million copies—has also earned the pair a fair amount of backlash, so it's a good thing both are eloquent defenders of their trade. Not surprisingly, Karr and McCourt take issue with the negative way some critics have responded to the memoir profusion, treating the books as if they were a frivolous, even dangerous fad—like lawn darts. "I can't understand the hostile reaction," McCourt says, sounding more puzzled than perturbed. "There's a lot of, I don't know, begrudgery, as we call it in Ireland." Karr complains that successful memoirists are blamed for the glut of lesser works in a way successful novelists are not. "I wish someone would call Richard Ford and nag him about how many Harlequin romances are published every year," she says. While fending off detractors can be tiresome, neither Karr nor McCourt seems weary of the more benign effects of literary stardom, such as the way people feel compelled to stand up at readings and share their own life stories. "I'm so over myself I could scream," Karr admits. "But to hear what other people have to say—it's like you're given this great window into the American psyche."

BRIAN FARNHAM



Tours

Indoor New York: The Fifties—3/13 at 12:30 P.M.: A look at Manhattan's grand and varied interiors. Meet at the New York Public Library, 127 E. 58th St. (935-3960); $10.

St. Patrick's Weekend—3/15 at 2 P.M.: Explore the area between Chatham Square and Houston St. Meet on the front steps of City Hall (439-1090); $9.

Irish New York—3/14 at 1 P.M.: Celebrate St. Patrick's early and walk through the old Irish neighborhoods of New York. Call 718-721-5254 for additional information and meeting place. $12.

"Old Chelsea"—3/14 at 2 P.M.: A tour of one of New York's hottest neighborhoods. Meet at the Flatiron Building, Fifth Ave. at 23rd St. (969-8262); $10.

"Ladies' Mile"—3/14 at 2 P.M.: See where Lillian Russell got her hats, Diamond Jim Brady bought his diamonds, first ladies were fitted for their wardrobes, and more. Meet at the Flatiron Building, Fifth Ave. at 23rd St. (969-8262); $10.

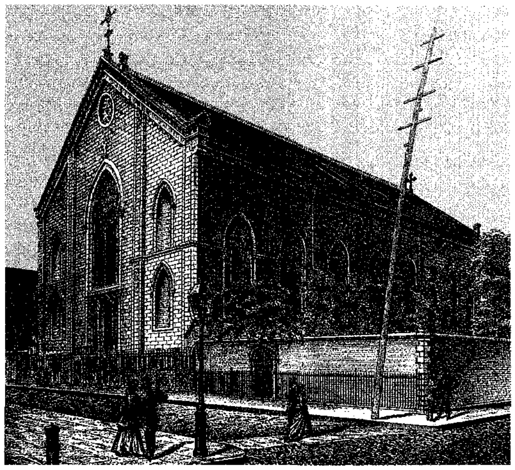
Exhibitions

Paul Strand: A Photographer in His Garden—Through 4/4: A collection of photographs, many of which

Photographs: top, Leslie Hassler/Outline; bottom, Marion Ettlinger/Outline.

Happening

In honor of St. Patrick's Day (but a few days before the holiday grips the city in Celtic gridlock), Urban Explorations leads a walking tour of Irish New York. On Saturday, March 14, visit turn-of-the-century bakeries and coffee shops, the site of the infamous Five Points Slum, and the original St. Patrick's Cathedral (below). Call 718-721-5254 for reservations.



have never been published, created by the artist during the final years of his life in Ogreval, France. Aperture's Burden Gallery, 20 E. 23rd St. (505-5555, ext. 325); free.

Bridging New York—Through 6/28: Selections from the museum's painting, print, and photographic collections dealing with the city's bridges. The Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (534-1672); $5 suggested contribution.

"Proudly We Served"—Through 9/5: Photographs, artifacts, and models commemorating 200 years of service by African-American veterans. Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum, Pier 86, W. 46th St. (957-7055); $10.

50 Years of "The Subway Sun"—Through 3/22: An exhibit of the poster series "The Subway Sun," which regularly inspired and admonished passengers on everything from their patriotic duty to proper underground etiquette. New York Transit Museum, Boerum Pl. and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601); $3.

Assignment: Rescue—Through 3/29: "The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee" commemorates Varian Fry, an American relief worker responsible for rescuing nearly 2,000 Jews and opponents of the Nazis, including Marc Chagall, André Breton, and Hannah Arendt, from Vichy France during World War II. Though Fry's efforts are not as well known as those of Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, his accomplishments are no less riveting. The exhibit is composed largely of historic photographs, artifacts, and related works of art. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); $7.

New York From Above: An Aerial View—Through 6/14: An exhibit of 26 paintings by contemporary painter and geographer Spelman Evans Downer that chart the evolution of Greater Gotham over the past 100 years. His work depicts historical landscapes before extensive urbanization and also includes space-age satellite views of Manhattan. The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); $5 suggested contribution.

Sports

Crime and Punishment—Two things were evident from the Nets' recent home-and-away battle with division-leading Miami: one, the Nets can now, officially, play with the big boys. Two, the NBA still has no clue how to deal with its bullies. Keith Askins' brutal hit on Keith Van Horn in the first game came while the Nets' rookie forward was soaring in for a layup. Askins got fined the obligatory jaywalker's sum and suspended for two games. But when you think about it, wasn't his hit every bit as dangerous, if not more so, as the choke-hold Latrell Sprewell put on coach P. J. Carlessimo? At least, you could argue, Carlessimo was in a position to defend himself. But Van Horn was in mid-air when he got body-checked and the blow sent him to the ground face-first. It's doubtful Askins was trying to seriously hurt Van Horn, but every flagrant foul involves intent and, therefore, culpability. As it turned out, Van Horn escaped unhurt, but then again, so did Carlessimo (but for a few scratches). And that didn't stop the NBA from banning Sprewell for a year. This is not to suggest that Askins should get as stiff a penalty, but isn't it ironic that the league is more strict in punishing off-the-court violence then in responding to incidents within the game itself? Van Horn and his teammates take their bruised but resilient selves on the road this week against tough San Antonio, slumping Houston, and hopeless Dallas. *See Game Week for team schedules.*

Online

New York Magazine on the Web—Visit a new Website daily by clicking from "Stephanie's Surf Report" (in the "Today" section of www.newyorkmag.com). This week: forget about the Oscars and vote for your favorite independent-film short at the Sync; get jazzed about a site that plays more than the old standards; find the facts at a virtual information booth; let a wacky Warner Bros. beaver chew his way through your desktop; and read answers to life's most profound questions from the venerable Cecil Adams. And as you browse around www.nymag.com, be sure to pay a visit to our latest Web exclusives, like Vanessa Grigoriadis's daily event picks in "Vanessa Takes Manhattan," a new neighborhood guide, "50 Ways to Love Brooklyn Heights" by Ondine Cohane, and various book reviews. Plus, as always, we've got selected articles from the current issue, an expanded, searchable "Cue" section, and oh so much more.

GAME WEEK

HOME ● AWAY ●

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
RANGERS	NJ MSG 7:30PM		SJ MSG 7:30PM			BOS FOX 3PM	
ISLANDERS		BUF FSNY3 7:30PM		WAS FSNY 7:30PM		VAN FSNY 7:30PM	
DEVILS	NYR MSG 7:30PM	PHI FSNY 7:30PM		CAR FSNY 7:30PM		MON FSNY 7:30PM	
KNICKS		ORL MSG 7:30PM	CHA MSG 7:30PM			CLE MSG 7:30PM	IND MSG 7:30PM
NETS		SA FSNY 8:30PM		HOU FSNY 8:30PM		DAL FSNY 8:30PM	
	3/9	3/10	3/11	3/12	3/13	3/14	3/15

Borow *continued from page 37*

"I DON'T LIKE IT THERE," SAYS MEISTRICH flatly. *There* is Los Angeles. "I don't want to raise my kid there. I don't like not having seasons. I don't like it when the earth shakes. I've chosen to stay here." The Shooting Gallery's wood-paneled offices at Sixth Avenue and Spring Street are another reason why. The casual, clubhousey space vibrates with confidence. Meistrich is trailed most of the time by two large Samoyed-chow mutts that he brings to the office every day. (He leaves his pet wolf at home.)

"We've had the opportunity to go to L.A. and do big deals on a lot," he says. "But I don't want to be a part of that system, where you pay someone $20 million and then get hassled the whole time 'cause the fruit isn't red enough."

Or, as Gosse puts it: "The only thing that puts the fear of God in us is having to move out to L.A. and work for the studios." The Shooting Gallery, Meistrich says, hopes to release ten to twelve films a year, most of which will be financed for less than $10 million. "The studio is really our blockbuster. It's selfish. I want to live here; I want to have a movie company here. So I want to make it as good as possible for me to do that. We've chosen to try and make that happen brick by brick. We've invested heavily in the infrastructure and relationships required to make profitable movies in New York."

BUT CAN THEY PULL IT OFF? "WELL," SAYS Gosse, "for a long time there were only two airports in New York. Then along came the plan for Newark, and everybody said, 'Nah, it'll never work in Jersey.' But there was a need for it. Now there's Kaufman Astoria and some other places, but there's a need."

Thornton eloquently concurs: "Those fellas are bulldogs. They'll do it." Then he tells a story of Meistrich's early days on a film set. "He was a PA, and they told him to watch some equipment down in the subway. Then they forgot about him. Larry didn't move, stayed down there all night. They found him sleeping on the stuff in the morning. Now you'll probably find him sleeping out there in Jersey."

Inspecting the Harrison site early one morning, Meistrich seems almost cocky: "I'm confident," he says. "Look, I never thought I'd be doing even this much. I wanted to create a place where we could make money, and make movies that guys I played ball with in college wouldn't give me shit about. If it gets any better, then it's a bonus." Taking a last look before leaving, he adds, "It is a little intimidating. But, you know, it's not like it's the Super Bowl. It's just *movies.*" ■

Photograph from Corbis-Bettman.

kids

Ground Rules:

● = free

● = now or never (one-shot deal or final week)

Cool Defined...High 5

Children's Events

Arts Marathon—**HIGH 5 ON FIFTH ARTS FESTIVAL** is a bargain bonanza of cultural events all over the city geared particularly to teenagers. A $5 ticket opens the door to any or all of the 60 theatrical events and presentations, 22 museum tours, and 90 performances. Choices include the opportunity to watch amateur *Night at the Apollo* winners, or participate in a logo-designing workshop at the Cooper Hewitt Museum. Flyers giving details are at participating locations around the city, or obtainable by calling Hi5-TKTS (445-8587); logging on to www.high5tix.com.; or e-mailing High 5 at info@high5tix.com. (Adults and younger kids are welcome, but tickets are sold only to teens—with proof of age.) A limited number of same-day tickets will be sold at the High 5 HomeSpot at the Goethe-Institut (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.), El Museo del Barrio (Fifth Ave. at 104th St.), or MOMA (11 W. 53rd St.). Free shuttle buses run daily between museums. 3/14 and 3/15; 11 A.M.–5 P.M.●

Past Meets Present—Fred Greenspan's *Punch's Magic Lamp,* based on the old story of Aladdin, is performed at **THE ABIGAIL ADAMS SMITH MUSEUM,** a charming holdover from the days when midtown Manhattan was a country escape. 3/15 at 2. 421 E. 61st St. (838-6878). Admission $3, $2 for children.●

Fostering Independence—Richard J. Eichler, Ph.D., speaks to parents about "When and How to Encourage Independence in Your Learning Disabled or A.D.D. Child." 3/11 at 8. Next month, 4/29, another talk for parents of L.D. and A.D.D. children is about helping adolescent children become resilient adults. Call for time and location. The Dalton School, 108 E. 89th St. (722-0610); $30 per family for all or part of the four-part series, sponsored by **THE CHURCHILL SCHOOL AND CENTER.**

Air Time—With Brazilian ballerina Daielma Santos, Fred Garbo of the Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co. has toured the world with his always colorful, frequently absurd pieces, which tap the comic-theatrical potential of inflated shapes, gymnastics, dance, juggling, and magic-making. Through 3/15. **NEW VICTORY THEATER,** 209 W. 42nd St. (239-6200); $10–$25.●

Greatest Show on Earth—With this 128th Edition of **RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY,** the circus returns to some of its outlandish P.T. Barnum roots: Arrive an hour before the performance and meet with "the world's tallest man"—eight feet tall—and Michu, a 33-inch "Tom Thumb." See a "fire-breathing Vesuvius," the "Lady in the Cube," and a man they are calling "The Iron Jaw." Continental Airlines Arena, 3/10–3/15; Nassau Coliseum, 3/17–3/23; Madison Square Garden, 3/27–3/13. Call 307-7171 for information; $10.50–$42.50.

Swiss Family Robinson—**THEATREWORKS/USA** presents a musical version of the tale of shipwreck. For children ages 7 and up. 3/14 and 3/15 at 12:30. The Promenade Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (627-7373). Individual tickets are $18.50; a flexible ten-ticket subscription is $145.●

Theater of the Absurd—**WE MUST BE IDIOTS'** production of *The King Stag* is a comic-romantic fairy tale with an edgy modern sensibility and wit incorporating puppets and live music. Through 3/21. Access Theater Space, 380 Broadway, fourth floor (946-2142). Tickets are $12, $10 students and seniors.

The Beloved Dearly—Doug Cooney's darkly comic the pet-funeral business. Recommended for ages 6 and up. 3/13 through 3/29. **TADA!** 120 W. 28th St. (627-1732). Tickets are $12, $6 for children.

Tall Tales—Cast members from an upcoming New York City Opera production of Benjamin Britten's *Paul Bunyan* lead a discussion and sing-along of rousing Victorian ballads, Broadway jazz numbers, and songs from Italian opera. 3/15 at 4:15. **MUSEUM OF AMERICAN FOLK ART,** 2 Lincoln Square, Columbus Ave. at 66th St. (595-9533). The event is free of charge. Reserve.●●

Flower Face—Welsh legend and the reality of present-day life in New York City are intertwined in a play by **CITY LIGHTS YOUTH THEATRE'**s playwright-in-residence Jennifer Hayes. The drama focuses on a young girl's anguish over her parents' divorce. 3/13, 3/14, and 3/15. City Center, 130 W. 56th St. (262-0200); $5.●

Devilish Dahl—*Danny, the Champion of the World,* a rarely seen movie based on Roald Dahl's novel about a father and son whose auto shop is threatened by a greedy developer, rounds out the "Dahl's Dementia" festival at **LINCOLN CENTER'**s Walter Reade Theater. 3/14 and 3/15 at 2. 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5610); $3. (Children 12 and under with an idea for a film series should enter the 1998 Kids' Curator Contest by 3/31. Call the theater for details.)●

Whiz Kids—**LITTLE ORCHESTRA SOCIETY** takes audiences back to the 1800s to meet an extraordinary brother and sister duo: "Fanny and Felix: the Mendelssohn Kids." Felix's compositions are well known, but Fanny, his mentor, acknowledged as Berlin's greatest pianist in her day, gave only one public concert and couldn't publish compositions under her name because of her gender. Hear pieces by both siblings—including Felix's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the New York premiere of Fanny's Overture. Accompanying the orchestra on piano and violin are accomplished 12-year-old players Ang Li and Shunsake Sato. For children 6 to 12. 3/14 at 11 and 1. Lincoln Center's **AVERY FISHER HALL** 704-2100. (A benefit lunch follows the earlier performance.) $15–$32.●

What is Cool?—Tickets will go fast for a Wynton Marsalis–hosted "Jazz for Young People Concert" that considers cool schools of modern jazz. 3/28 at 11 and 1. **ALICE TULLY HALL,** 140 W. 65th St. (721-6500); $12 for adults, $8 for kids.●

cue

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On Stage
My Favorite Things

"Isabella dances about on the bed, singing along with the video," says Christine Pittel, describing her 3-year-old daughter's enthusiasm for *The Sound of Music.* So at a recent preview of the new Broadway revival, Pittel was "a little worried" her child might blurt out "You aren't the real Maria!" or rush onstage to join the actors. The tale of adventure and romance at the Martin Beck Theater—starring seven youngsters—is emerging as a sleeper hit with family audiences. Clusters of kids, on the town with the 'rents, were mostly seated toward the front of the theater, and Isabella, in her high-waisted green corduroy dress, was by no means the only member of the audience ignoring the sign in the lobby stating CHILDREN UNDER FOUR YEARS OF AGE WILL NOT BE ADMITTED. None of the youngsters misbehaved, though Pittel later acknowledged that Isabella "could barely contain herself" when Rebecca Luker, as Maria, began exuberantly singing "*The hills are alive . . .*" "She cupped my cheek and literally trembled with joy," Pittel says. Older—legal—kids also relished the show, preferring it, on the whole, to the movie. Megan, a 9-year-old New Jersey girl, appreciated "how you can see the scenes change, because it never goes completely black." The children in the cast were repeatedly singled out for praise: "They sing better than the adults," said Megan's cousin Zara: "How do they hold their breath so long?" Georgia, an 11-year-old Rodgers and Hammerstein aficionado, noticed "more about the war" in the stage version, and elbowed her mother whenever her favorite actress, the cherubic Andrea Bowen, appeared as 6-year-old Marta von Trapp. The canny sixth-grader wonders whether the real critics will be as smitten with the revival: "They'll probably say the kids are a little too cute or something." **BARBARA ENSOR**

Photograph by Joan Marcus.

in concert

The premiere of Tan Dun's *Symphony 1997*

Classical Music

Tuesday, March 10

Wolfgang Holzmair, Baritone—Performs lieder by Schumann. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1100 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (570-3949), at 8; $35.*

Wednesday, March 11

Portrait of an Artist—Tan Dun leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Yo-Yo Ma, cellist, and the Hubei Imperial Bell Ensemble of China, in the premiere of his Symphony *1997. Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $25–$45*

Omega Ensemble—Performs Beethoven, Kalliwoda, Brahms, and Finckel. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $25.*

Ancient Music at St. Bartholomew's—Performances by Daniel Moriarty, organist, and Jack Sutte, trumpet. *St. Bartholomew's, 109 E. 50th St. (378-0248), at 7:30; $10–$20.*

Sergio Fiorentino, Piano—Performs the Bach/Busoni Prelude and Fugue in D major, as well as Beethoven and Schumann. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $10–$15.*

Schubert's Last Lieder—Hermann Prey, baritone, James Levine, piano, and Joseph Anderer, French horn, perform lieder from the last year of the composer's life. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100), at 8; $35.*

Thursday, March 12

Ursula Oppens, Piano—Performs two sonatas by Beethoven, and one by Elliott Carter. *Miller Theater, 116th St. and Broadway (854-7799), at 8; $15.*

San Francisco Symphony—Performs works by Mahler, Copland, and Stravinsky; Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $17–$65.*

Interpretations—Performs works by Ezra Sims, Harry Partch, Lee Hyla, Daniel Rothman, and Eric Moe. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $17.50.*

Musica de Camara—Performs Beethoven, Mozart, and Strauss. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $15.*

Bargemusic—Quartet performances of Takemitsu, Wuorinen, Prokofiev, and Brahms. *Fulton Ferry Landing, under the Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn (718-624-4061), at 7:30; $20–$30.*

Friday, March 13

John Aler, Tenor—Performs with Warren Jones, piano. *Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $30.*

San Francisco Symphony—See 3/12.

Saturday, March 14

Chinese American Choral Society—Performs Fauré's *Requiem;* Teresa P. Cheung, conductor. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $15–$25.*

Travels With Nadja—Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, violin, performs works by Porter and Gershwin. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100), at 8; $35.*

Richard Goode, Piano—Performs Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, and Debussy. *Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 7:30; $16–$60.*

Ground Rules:

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and public square/park performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, outdoors or in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Cerddorion—The 24-voice ensemble performs works by Josquin Desprez. *St. Michael's, 99th St. and Amsterdam Ave. (774-4105), at 8; $20.*

Sunday, March 15

New England Symphonic Ensemble—Performs Haydn's *Creation;* John Rutter, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 2; $16–$65.*

Musical Armenia—Performances by Anna Saradjian, piano, and Zareh Tchiroyan, violin. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 2; $20.*

National Youth and Children's Choirs—Performs works by Rutter, Busto, Crocker, and Leavitt; Andre Thomas and Henry Leck, conductors. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $20*

Ken Hamao, Violin—Performs works by Veracini, Kabalevsky, Rachmaninoff, and Kreisler. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 7; free.*

Marian Conti, Piano—Performs works by Turina, J. S. Bach, Liszt, James Cohn, and Debussy. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 3; $15.*

New York Chamber Symphony—Performs a piece by Mendelssohn, with Elmar Oliveira, violin; and a piece by Barbara Kolb, with Michael Boriskin, piano. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (721-6500), at 8; $30.*

Ben Heppner, Tenor—Performs with the Orchestra of St. Luke's; Julius Rudel, conductor. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (721-6500), at 3; $25–$45.*

BBC Symphony Orchestra—Performs Ravel, Berlioz, and Strauss, with Felicity Lott, soprano; Andrew Davis, conductor. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $25–$45.*

Jean-Pierre Antaki, Guitarist—Performs works by John Dowland, J. S. Bach, others. *St. Bartholomew's, 109 E. 50th St. (378-0248), at 2; $10.*

Bargemusic—See 3/12, at 4.

Monday, March 16

Stephanie Blythe, Mezzo-Soprano, and Warren Jones, Piano—Perform Haydn, Dvořák, Strauss, and Alan Smith. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 7:30; $20.*

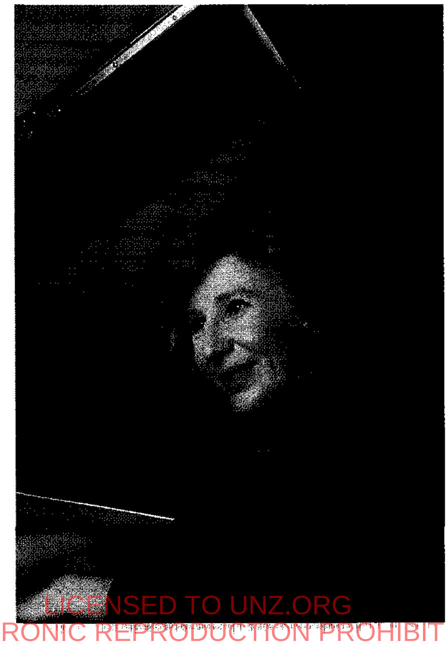
Jane Coop, Piano—Performs Brahms, Beethoven, and Schumann. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $18–$25.*

PULSE Percussion Ensemble—Performs works by Henry Brandt, Bababatunde Olatunji, Chen May Tchi, David Shohl, and John Cage. *Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. (749-2802), at 8; $12.*

New York Chamber Symphony—See 3/15, at 5.

Previews
Mission Impossible

Pianist Ursula Oppens, known primarily as a new-music specialist, has taken on a project that would challenge even the most indomitable classicist. Oppens is playing all 32 of Beethoven's sonatas in a nine-concert cycle, with a significant piece by a modern American composer on each program. On March 12 at the Miller Theater, Oppens offers the second concert in her three-year-long study. She performs the Hammerklavier as well as Elliott Carter's demanding Piano Sonata.



Photograph by Christian Steiner.

Opera

Metropolitan Opera—Performs Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila,* 3/10 and 3/14 at 8; Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore,* 3/11 at 8 and 3/14 at 1:30; Puccini's *Madama Butterfly,* 3/12 at 8; Wagner's *Lohengrin,* 3/13 at 7; and Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette,* 3/16 at 8. *Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (362-6000); $24–$200.*

Amato Opera—Performs Verdi's *Rigoletto,* 3/15 at 2:30. *319 Bowery (228-8200); $20.*

Dance

Paul Taylor—Performs two new works, *Piazzolla Caldera* and *The Word,* 3/10–3/15. *City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212); $15–$50.*

Buto-Sha Tenkei—Performs *Nocturne,* 3/10–3/15. *Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. (242-0800); $26.*

Michael Mao—Performs new works entitled *Tidal Moon, Riddles* and *Day of Anger,* 3/12–3/14 at 8. *Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 695 Park Ave., at 68th St. (772-4448); $20.*

Jennifer Lacey and Zeena Parkins—Performs *Fourteen tiny pictures, no more, no less,* 3/12–3/15 at 8:30. *P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (477-5288); $15.*

92nd St. Y Harkness Dance Project—This week in the monthlong series, works by Maia Claire Garrison/M'Zawa Danz, 3/12 and 3/14 at 8, and 3/15 at 5. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.*

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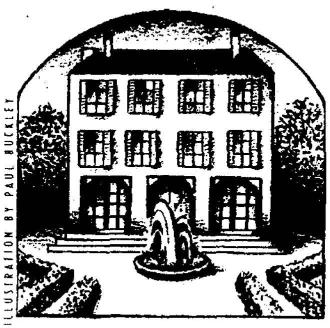

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Beautiful Blond PhD—Slim, elegant, seeks distinguished, extremely successful, cultured 60ish gentleman. 2294 ✉

Former Fashion Model—Caribbean-born, world-traveled, bright, warm, sensual and self-sufficient - seeks tall, cultured man of substance, 49-65, to share the pleasures of life and a romantic, committed relationship. Serious responses only. 2288 ✉ ☎

Very Pretty, Vivacious Attorney—Sophisticated, compassionate, feminine, athletic, Jewish, 5'7". Loves skiing, tennis, running, culture, country weekends and travel. Seeks well-educated (JD, MD, MBA-type), caring, confident and refined preppy man, 40-52, who desires a lasting relationship - hopefully a family. 2261 ✉☎

Black Male—33, professional, seeks childless, nonsmoking, single, attractive lady for friendship. Picture? 2216 ✉

Unpretentious Pisces Man—Enjoy amber sunsets, boating the LI Sound, foreign travel, the arts, city life. Am an accomplished entrepreneur in graphic arts (know how to use a Mac?), 38, 6', handsome, brown eyes/hair, Jewish, family-oriented and fun-loving. I have limited free time; avoiding the singles scene. I want chemistry with mature, smart, beautiful (212) woman, at least 5'4", 29-35, preferably brunette, slim, sexy and ready for lasting relationship with a really good guy. Note/photo, please. 2283 ✉ ☎

Hi Fabulous Person—And you're thinking this is all about you because... well, you are! I'm a very attractive, white, physically fit, 5'6" woman in her early 50s. I am a news producer for a major network where bad news is good news. Shooting for an attractive, physically fit guy who comes with his own agenda (aka a life). A best friend would really make the relationship bad...which really means good. Note or phone. 2241 ✉ ☎

Last Of A Dying Breed—Slightly off-center Wasp, 41 - self-sufficient, many interests, sense of humor, athletic, easy on the eyes. Seeks female counterpart, 40 and under. Photo/note. 2238 ✉

Widowed With 9-Year-Old Daughter—White Jewish female, brunette, 39, nice-looking - enjoys movies, travel, theater. Looking for male, 40s-50s, nonsmoker, similar interests. Possible long-term relationship. 2197 ✉

Where Have You Been?—Blading while I was biking, on the beach while I was skiing, or at a Net game while I was at the Knicks? If you are an attractive, successful, Jewish, marriage-minded man, 30s-40s, this 32-year-old, pretty and petite, outgoing, intelligent woman would like our paths to finally cross. 2270 ✉

Attractive NJ Jewish Widow—Seeks quality, successful Jewish man, early 70s, who likes golf, sports, travel. 2203 ✉

In Search Of Magical Connections—Single Jewish male, good-looking, mid 40s, creative, financially secure, seeks rare female, 28-43, with heart, looks, wit and that special X factor. Note/photo. 2295 ✉

A Caring, Creative Surgeon—With spark, passion for life, laughter...a good-looking Renaissance man with warmth - down-to-earth, communicative, 5'10", very fit, 43, fun - seeks truly sincere, bright woman under 37, for romance, commitment. Phone/photo necessary. 2293 ✉ ☎

Rapunzel Awaits Her Prince Charming—Locked in her tower, she is waiting to let down her wavy golden mane so just the right prince can come up and rescue her! Rapunzel sits pining at her window with her blue-green emerald eyes, pouty lips and a slight, petite frame. Her handsome prince must be honest, caring, intelligent, highly ambitious, extremely successful, self-fulfilled, Jewish (29-36). Rapunzel wants to let down her hair and embrace her long-awaited prince with the most passionate hugs and kisses and ride off into the sunset to begin her freedom and their newfound happiness together. Note/photo/phone. 2195 ✉

Stop The Search—Jewish female, PhD, energetic, passion for life - youthful/athletic, 41, 5'3", slender, natural beauty. Seeks Jewish male, 35 plus - good heart/soul, communicative, affectionate, for relationship/family. Note/photo. 2258 ✉ ☎

Open Your Eyes And See—Me, a 37-year, 5'4", stunning lady. We are intelligent, accomplished, spirited, have a high level of integrity and are optimists. We have a passionate nature and have a high regard for family values. Our quests in life have taken us to the level where we have escalated our focus to fulfilling our desires for a lifelong partner who is prepared to embark on our most precious journey, that of seeing life through the eyes of our children. Come let us share life's most special and rewarding gifts. Detailed letter/photo a must or e-mail: primsoleil@aol.com with gif or tif. 2200 ✉

Spring Is Coming—Time to play. Lawyer, patient - likes kids, country life, hoping for a petite woman, 40 plus, who'd like to slowly build something permanent. ascob1@aol.com or 2237 ✉

Our Vivacious, Beautiful—Intelligent, fabulously energetic grandma would enjoy dating a handsome, active, brilliant, cultured mensch with a sense of humor (70+). Grandma lives in New York metropolitan area. She loves movies, theater, ballet, good food and good conversation. She is wonderful and seeks same. 2217 ✉

Sophisticated Gentleman—Upper East Side, late 60s, tall, slim, attractive, active corporate executive - seeks tall, athletic, slender soul mate for exciting romantic life. Current photo a must. 2273 ✉

Handsome, Tall, Modest—Multi-millionaire (35, 6'3") seeks beautiful, sweet-natured woman, 20-40, for love and marriage. Note/photo, please. 2257 ✉

Commitment-phile—Jewish male, 39, 6', committed to the tango, the Jets, fitness, friends and good laughs. Most important, am committed to committing to the right woman, 28-38, warm, insightful, an attractive nonsmoker. 2212 ✉

Why Look Here? Why Not?—Someone different, a cut above. Attractive, slim, petite, youthful, intelligent, warm, kind, Jewish, religious, divorced mom (two teens), 47, seeks emotionally and legally available, Jewish, religious, healthy, fit, intelligent, kind, fun-loving, family-oriented mensch who enjoys everything from the Met to the Mets. Note/photo/phone. 2226 ✉

Life's Too Short—Not to have met Mr. Right. My king is tall (5'10" up, dark, handsome (JFK Junior/Lorenzo Llamas type), 34-42, from hippiness to yuppie, mega-successful, athletic, fit, affluent, secure and a regular kinda dude who enjoys the finer things in life and the best it offers: comedy, sports (Yanks, Mets, Angels), fine dining, art... Hundreds of varied interests - uptown, downtown, East Side, West Side, boating, sun, travel, the beach...motorcycles to museums and Monet, rock 'n' roll - Pink Floyd, Grateful Dead to Mariah Carey (who I resemble). Your queen is 34, Jewish-Italian, hazel-eyed, dirty blond, sexy with pizzazz and traditional values, fashion radio TV exec who lives life to its fullest. Together, we'll start our own royal kingdom, enveloped with new friends, a little prince or princess to call our own. Photo for reply. 2291 ✉ ☎

Brains And Beauty—33-year-old Jewish woman with great sense of humor, willing to try all new things. Seeks Jewish man, 30s, upbeat, fun, handsome and intelligent, for whatever may come. 2271 ✉

Very Attractive, Long Blond/Blue—5'10", slim/curvy professional girl, 28, seeks intelligent, witty, great-looking, tall, nonsmoking man, 27-35ish with confidence, a love of music, ocean, animals and nature. You'll be pleasantly surprised. Answer when you're ready. Photo. 2302 ✉

Very Pretty, Witty, Intelligent—Active, youthful 52-year-old lawyer who is warm and caring, Rubenesque, great smile; cuddles with her cats (would rather cuddle with "you"), roams the world from Tucson to Tunis for fun and adventure; loves hot dogs and champagne, movies, music and the arts, the outdoors and her BMW; lives nice lifestyle with family, friends and two grown children; seeking a not-religious Jewish professional, businessman or king with a good sense of humor, who still believes in love and values the above. Bald or belly okay. E-mail LindaLaws@aol.com. 2207 ✉ ☎

Stunning Jewish Woman—49, professional warm, engaging, unencumbered, tall, slender, passionate woman of integrity - seeks quality gentleman for all the right reasons. Photo appreciated. 2252 ✉

Ensnare Me—Attractive, single Jewish man, 39, Anne Rice fan, cultured, literary, romantic and playful, seeks to abandon the pedestrian and explore the esoteric with a strong-willed woman, average to Rubenesque, who will literally captivate me with her charms. Can dance if forced to. Seeking friend, lover, captress - in any combination. 2251 ✉ ☎

Passion For Life, Laughter—Attractive, slim, petite, sensual, fun, vibrant, successful brunette with a great smile, class, creativity and down-to-earth values. Passions include sailing, traveling, sports, arts, etc. Values honesty, trustworthiness, humility, mutual respect and friends. Seeking an attractive, successful, kind, well-mannered gentleman who enjoys all that life has to offer. I can honestly say that I have it all except someone to share it with. Please be between 35 and 55. I am a very young 45. Age is relative if you have spirit. Note, photo and phone. 2225 ✉☎

Brilliant, Loving, Debonair—Successful Manhattan developer, 54, 6'3", Ivy degrees, handsome, optimistic, cuddly, kind, Jewish, needs happy, capable, gentle, brilliant, empathic, pretty, sexy, sociable, tactile, thin woman, 30s, for permanent love, put "us" before career, start family. 2243 ✉

Jet-Set Male—Desires long-term relationship. Are you an intelligent and beautiful woman used to being treated with respect and generosity, or desirous of such? If so, a fairy-tale life of travel and luxury may be available. Please send all of the following: note, photo, age, height, weight and phone to: 2254 ✉

Wish To Wed Warm, Wise Woman—To worship and wander world with. Successful, solid and sensitive solicitor seeks to secure and savor sassy, saucy, sexy, sunny, spunky, scrupulous and slender spouse of sense and sensibility to share all seasons. You have laughing eyes that are full of mischief, and are nice, intelligent, open, outgoing, elegant and younger than about 52. I am a Wall Street lawyer, 60s, tall, slim, reasonable and considerate, lapsed Wasp, Manhattanite who enjoys travel, driving, walking, tennis, music, books, movies and good food and wine - especially when shared with my best friend with whom that special chemistry exists. Photo helps. 2301 ✉

Genuinely Nice Guy—39, bright, warm, successful, handsome, Jewish and athletic, seeks special woman with a big heart and warm smile, for keeps. Preferably you're smart, introspective, attractive, refined and fit. Photo/(212) a plus. 2284✉☎

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Ready And Willing—Successful, attractive, fit, funny Jewish businessman, 50, 5'8", who enjoys fresh air, ocean/mountains, music, seeks a kind-hearted, warm, slender, attractive, worldly Jewish woman with a curious mind and sparkle, a sweet inspiration, of age to start family. Life in town and beach. Nonsmoker. Photo/note. 2233 ✉

It Take Two To Tango—Tall, professional, Jewish (48) male, searching for lady counterpart under 42. Photo. 2219✉

Slim, Sexy, Petite—Single Jewish female, late 30s, loves sunbathing, animals, scuba, travel, music and computers. Seeking handsome, witty, successful, nonsmoking Jewish male, 30s-40s, ready for romance, marriage and children with the right person. Note/photo/phone, please. 2221✉

Notorious Manhattan Publisher—With lust for life, fine food and cigars, seeks open-minded lady to share his time with. You must be slim, 25-45, and able to know a good thing when you see it. If you think love is an adventure, give me a try. Phone and photo a must. 2264 ✉

Life After Club Med And Seinfeld—Upper West Side, athletic, 33, mensch - enjoys scuba, sushi, Steely Dan, traveling, my one-year-old nephew, beaches and brunch. Seeks passionate, easygoing, slim, attractive Jewish woman, 27-34, who is outgoing and loves to laugh. Let's picnic together in Central Park this spring. Note/photo a must. 2222 ✉

Stunning And Svelte—40-year-old professional female interested in fit, strong, bright, handsome man who is 40-55, likes children (I have one) and can match my beauty, grace and wit. No nerds or uptight men, please. My description is real... Make sure yours doesn't lie. Handwritten note, good photo. No photo, no reply. 2206 ✉

Beautiful Hispanic Physician—43, trim, fit, sensuous, intense, seeks well-educated, fit, professional NYC male for the future. 2256 ✉ ☎

Make Dreams Come True—Kind-hearted, sincere, fun-loving professional male, Jewish, seeks down-to-earth female, 36-40, for loving marriage. Photo. 2209 ✉

Outstanding—Scholar, athlete, gentleman. Man of substance and style. Good-looking, elegant Jewish attorney, 39, 5'9", 160, divorced (father of one), accomplished trial lawyer. Loves golf, dinner by candlelight, rock 'n' roll. Seeking truly stunning professional woman, 28-40 - big heart, great smile, terrific figure. If you crave romance, fun, marriage, passion, and the good life (on CT shoreline), then this is a unique opportunity. Note/photo a must. 2202 ✉

Warmhearted—Attractive man, 41 - film buff, reader, appreciator of fine beers, contemporary music, a good laugh... Seeks woman to share life. Phone/photo. 2282✉

Passionate, Pretty, Smart—Petite, 5'5", slim brunette, high energy, MBA, JD-to-be, dancer - seeking professional, kind, communicative male, 30-45, for lifelong relationship. Note/photo/phone. 2223 ✉☎

Vital, Warm, Compassionate Woman—Self-employed, intelligent and cultured, seeks male soul mate, mid 50s-60s. 2228✉

Statuesque, Rubenesque—Nonconformist, non-athletic, semi-retired, young 60s, prefers nonsmoking, nonreligious, intellectually adventurous, open-minded gentleman with a sense of humor, for a gathering of the minds and the enjoyment of simple pleasures. POB 740078, Rego Park, NY 11374

Stylish, Fit, Attractive—Fun-loving, 34, Asian professional seeks serious cuddles from a cute, adventurous, humorous, ambitious and kind man to enjoy life together. Photo and note. 2213 ✉

Handsome Attorney/Investor—70, looks 60, 5'10", slim, athletic, wealthy, warm, verbal, cerebral, droll sense of humor. Seeks well-educated, successful, pretty, slim, cultured female in her mid-late 50s, to share a good life. Recent clear photo a must/note/phone, please. Be honest - I am. 2229 ✉

Very Pretty MD—Slim, warm, gentle, Jewish, 40s, seeks sweetheart. 2278 ✉

Seeking Full-Time Boyfriend—Weekend hours, must be willing to spend quality time at the movies and museums, taking walks in Central Park, etc. Only serious-minded, single, white Christian males, 33-38, need apply. 2260 ✉ ☎

Sophisticated, Beautiful—Blue-eyed blond, 36, seeks old-fashioned romance with an established, handsome gentleman of class and integrity. Note/photo. 2255✉

Extremely Successful—European background, blue-eyed, handsome executive for worldwide operating company, seeking attractive, mid 20s-early 30s female for long-lasting, rewarding relationship, because I'm sure that you deserve the best. 2289 ✉

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Educated (BS/MS) Latina, 34—Looking for an educated, professional, childless, nonsmoking, domesticated, physically fit, honest, down-to-earth gentleman, 30-40, ready for marriage and children. Note/photo/phone. 2210 ✉

Friends Forever—Very attractive, shapely Jewish woman seeks introspective, passionate male friend (40-53). 2269 ✉

Tall, Slender, Sexy—Vital, verbal, active and attractive female seeks white male, 60-65. 2253 ✉

Attractive, Affluent, Articulate—Jewish female, 54, 5'5", North Shore, desires a gentle man who is lively and intellectual, pleasant and financially secure. I enjoy travel, theater, museums, movies, tennis, the NY Times. Photo requested. 2218 ✉

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Pretty Lady Litigator—Ivy grad, Upper East Side, house in Hamptons; enjoys running, daily exercise, tennis. Seeks sexy man, 48-60. Photo/note. 2208 ☒

Gay Male Doctor—51, 5'10", 165 (told I'm handsome and look much younger - you decide for yourself), healthy, athletic (volleyball, tennis, ski), cultured, strong and sensitive, responsible yet fun-loving. Are you what the doctor ordered? 35-50, career-oriented, physically fit, romantic and ready for committed relationship? If so, I'll cure what ails you. Note/phone/photo (preferred). 2300 ☒

Cute Jewish Funny Girl—37, (212), 5'1", in great shape, smart, outgoing, giving, with great Wall Street career success, diverse passions and happy life. You're a fit Jewish man, 33-43, who, like me, is sharp, classy, upbeat, open and affluent yet unpretentious, with a warm heart and a need to share it. Ready for love, marriage and family? No kids yet, please. Photo a must - will gladly exchange. 2274 ☒ ☎

Go Ahead, Answer My Ad—Me: attractive, Jewish Demi Moore type, sensual, voluptuous, 115 lbs, 5'2", 46, financially secure, with great personality. You: 45-62, financially and emotionally secure, physically fit, take-charge personality, generous, looking for serious relationship. Refined a must. Current photo/note. 2232 ☒

Handsome, Caring, Secure—Seeks trim, bright lady, 50s; travel. Photo/note. 2280☒

Very Lonely—Because I'm missing you to share my unlimited potential. This very *handsome, athletic, very wealthy executive* seeks slim, pretty female, mid 20s-early 30s, for any relationship that fits your personality, because I'm ready for any challenge to find love, happiness, friendship or anything else that is going to cure the pain of loneliness. 2290 ☒

Gay, Good-Looking Male, 38—Fun, fit, creative and successful - enjoys travel, antiques and jazz ...open to new adventures. Seeks sincere partner, 35-45, with similar attributes. Current photo/note. 2240 ☒

RELIABLE

Since 1982, New York's smart single professionals have found that *special someone* in New York Magazine Strictly Personals.

212-779-7500

Brilliant, Extremely Successful—Woman, 60, irreverent, sometimes outrageous, sometimes eccentric, utterly devoted and loving, whirlwind caretaker and doer, seeks gentle, decent man. 2215☒

Japanese, Long-Haired, Grace, Funny—Never married, model looks/smile, 5'4", self-made CEO. Seek handsome, powerful yet sweet Ivy/MBA/lawyer type, 32-52, well-dressed, sophisticated, humorous. We enjoy Paris, cooking, piano, city life style...leading to marriage. 2198 ☒

I Want More Time—*In my* 9-acre restored country farmhouse, and I need company. Work or don't work, but let's live and definitely play. Enthusiasm and sense of humor non-negotiable. I: red hair, blue eyes, smart, pretty. You: 45-65, tall, financially secure, sure of yourself, fit, affectionate. 2201 ☒ ☎

Hold Me Tight—Sincere, bright, pretty, sexy and slim, successful professional female, mid 40s, formerly married - no children; lively and playful, culturally sophisticated, loves the outdoors; adventurous, down-to-earth. Seeks a warm, communicative, successful soul mate who's his own unique person. Note/photo. 2234 ☒

Picture This—A tall, striking black woman, 40, fit, serene. I enjoy jazz, country weekends and dining adventures. Sharing all this and more with a very special man would make life extra-sweet. Photo/note. 2286 ☒

Sensational Downtown Lady—50, possesses good humor, warmth, intellectual vitality. In search of one near-perfect male companion. 2279 ☒ ☎

Friendly, Warm, Pretty—And slender, shoulder-length hair, green eyes, 40. Writes international science news, edits medical research. Raised on the beach, loves the city too. Jewish. *Seeks strong, special guy - maybe you?* Nina326@aol.com or 2298 ☒

Comely Female—Seeks distinctive Jewish man, 39 plus. Note/photo. 2259 ☒

This Ad Is A Gift For My Friend—Who is a Helen Hunt look-alike with brown hair (but don't let her know I said that). She's *tall, nonsmoker, professional, in her mid* 30s, in great shape, has many interests (one of which is to improve her tennis game). You must be sincere, financially and emotionally stable, and in your 40s. She's a great catch, and if you are too, please send note/photo. 2292 ☒

Tall, Dark And Handsome—32-year-old, athletic, outgoing, extremely successful businessman seeks his partner in life - she must be 19-32 years of age, thin, outgoing, loving and ready for the guy *she always dreamed of meeting*. Note and photo a must. 2242 ☒

Adventurous MD—Handsome, Catholic, white, seeks pretty, slim or athletic, nonsmoking woman, 26-38. Please send note and recent photo. 2268 ☒

Handsome Jewish Physician—Newly *available at 50, seeking exceptionally* bright and attractive, nonsmoking tri-state lady with picture. 2277 ☒

Long Island Guy—49, 6'1", good-looking, financially secure, seeks a slim, very pretty, tall and intelligent lady, 35-45, for long-term relationship. 2299 ☒ ☎

Action-Packed Lilith—30, imminent MD and Meg Tilly look-alike, seeks handsome Harry, 28-35. Photo/note. 2285 ☒

Let Me Love You—Do you like warm hugs? Passionate kisses in the middle of the night? Handsome CEO, 43, Jewish, has passion for personal and business success, with strong family values. Looking for attractive, fit, 32-45 woman who understands how to have a relationship, has a good sense of humor, is secure in her judgements. Kids are okay. Note/photo/phone, please. 2245 ☒

Professional, Handsome, Tall—Very fit, witty, 50s. Interests: theater, movies, jazz, nonfiction, friends, gym, etc. You: tall, slender, shapely, beautiful, accomplished, 42-48. (212) preferred. Recent photo/note. 2249 ☒

Look No Further—Funky, sweet, chic, petite, pretty single Jewish female, 34, who enjoys live music, movies, the beach, and loves to laugh...seeks a smart, confident, fit, creative, caring, nonsmoking, single Jewish gentleman, 32-42, who is ready to meet the right woman. Note/photo. 2272☒

No Couch Potato—Love travel, antiquing, arts, music ('30s up). A Jewish gentleman, financially solvent, 50-65, is sought by this romantic, slim blond, early 50s, a little uptown, a little downtown. 2193☒

Love Search—Successful Japanese restaurateur, 40, seeks long-term relationship with affectionate, fun-loving woman for magical romance. Drug/disease free. Nonsmoker. Photo/note, please. 2230 ☒

Very Handsome—Male, 30s, tall, athletic, dark Mediterranean looks, MD from Canada, sincere, nonsmoker, healthy lifestyle, seeks older, established American for possible marriage or life-term relationship. Phone. 45 Harbour Sq, POB *81022, Toronto Ontario Canada. M5J2V3*

Freelance TV Editor—42, Christian guy who loves travel, scuba, dining out, seeks stable relationship with upbeat professional woman in metro area. 2250 ☒

Good Girl Hunting—Very pretty, Jewish, 35-year-old, successful, cultured NYC exec seeks Jewish male soul mate, 32-45, who enjoys the beach, dining out, skiing. Photo/note. 2235 ☒ ☎

Youthful Wall Street Executive—Missing that special connection to complete a storybook love affair. You are a single female, 25-35, with Princess Diana type refinement, a *Monica Lewinsky sense of adventure*, Baywatch beauty and a sexy personality. Send dreams and photo. 2224 ☒

Sensible Romantic—Great guy, good looks, fun but responsible, Chinese-American, 35, 5'9", 165 lbs, JD, seeks to share all the simple pleasures of city living and sunny travels with a sweet, down-to-earth, pretty, playful, professional Asian, Hispanic or white woman. Please have a sense of humor and enjoy eating out, the arts and nature. Rhythm Revue fan a plus. *Note/photo/phone, please.* 2297 ☒

I Love To Cook, But Let's Go Out—I also love good restaurants, the theater, country weekends and the Mets. Stylish, professional white woman, 47, attractive and shapely, devoted friend. Seeks male companion. Note/photo. 2231 ☒

Always—Very attractive, slender, stylish, successful female, 39, who is exceptionally giving, loving and passionate, is selectively seeking a 50s-young 60, traditional gentleman to adore and spoil. He is very successful yet unpretentious. His pleasures range from highbrow entertainment to the simple and serene - and would prefer a country lifestyle. He's emotionally rich and still desires chemistry, romance and much passion - not for just an hour, not for just a day and not for just a year - but always... Letter/photo appreciated. 2262 ✉ ☎

Attractive Latin Female—46, well-educated, seeks caring male professional, healthy, nonsmoker, mid 40s-50s, for serious relationship. 2205 ✉

Pretty, Outdoorsy Fun/ny—Well-rounded, well-traveled, 39, 5'5", 112, upbeat, seeking 37-47, articulate, warm, well-read man for a relationship. 2247 ✉☎

I Am Hoping To Find—A warm, substantial, divorced man who has raised his children, who is looking for a bright, witty, sexy, sophisticated woman who loves to exercise, has a passion for movies, cooks and is comfortable both in the city and country environments. My life in the city revolves around the art world... Yours, I hope, around an interest you are equally passionate about. Perhaps this time we might both get lucky! They say it only takes one. Note/recent photo. 2265 ✉

Kind, Unpretentious, Adventurous—Single white female seeks like-spirited man with sense of humor and purpose, 35-55. 2220 ✉

I Believe In Miracles—And value love, life and laughter. Vibrant, warm, down-to-earth, well-educated, petite Jewish female, 40, seeks a man with qualities I can admire. 2267 ✉ ☎

Spiritual-Minded—Entrepreneurial woman, 30s, athletic, youthful, seeks highly intelligent, sincere gent with clear mind/positive attitude. Yoga practice, swimming, hiking, cultural events. 2266 ✉☎

Striving For Balance—Adventure with responsibility. Idealism with pragmatism. Passion with commitment. Jewish attorney - handsome, blue-eyed optimist, 46. Loves reading, film, music, pristine wilderness, children and life's challenges. Seeks exciting, independent woman with kindness, wit, intelligence and beauty. Photo, please. 2263 ✉

Dynamic, Cultured—50, trim, handsome and ready. You are a special woman 40ish or less, with a desire for a long-term monogamous relationship. Photo. 2236 ✉

Norwegian/Canadian/New Yorker—5'6", slim, well-built, divorced, 40s, extremely lovely, quietly sexy, chic, with a sense of humor, style, playfulness, depth... seeks guy, 45-57, to get to know. 2227 ✉ ☎

Single White Jewish Female—35, 5'6", slim, blond, Master's degree, teacher of hearing impaired, with interests in sports, music, movies, Farsi. Seeks serious relationship with intelligent mensch. Handwritten responses only. 2281 ✉

Beautiful Inside/Out—Jewish male, 32, seeking same in Jewish female. 2211 ✉ ☎

NYMessage

Dinner At Paul And Jimmy's?—You were the girl in the cable knit sweater, jeans and glasses, dining with two girlfriends on Monday night, March 2nd. I was the guy at the next table with some older folks. I know this is a long shot, but...I thought you were cute. Send note with photo. 2276 ✉

CLARK

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
SWEETIE!
Love, Claudia

NYMessage

A New Weekly Bannered Section in New York Magazine.
Are you looking for a travel companion, or an opera buff for that extra ticket? Need one more in your poker group?
Place your ad right here in *NYMessage*.
What, you didn't ask that dashing blond at the bookstore for a phone number?
Don't fret, place your ad in *NYMessage*.
212-779-7500 or fax your ad to 779-2449

Physician, 51—Seeks friendly, sincere woman, 30-50, for committed relationship. 2214 ✉

European-Born—Successful CEO, in my 60s but looking years younger, addicted to tennis, skiing, fine dining, arts, etc. In search of an attractive, dark-haired, slim woman possessing similar interests and sense of humor, up to 50 years young, to share with me an exciting life. 2244 ✉

You Could Now Have A—Best friend/lover and happy partner for life. I'm mellow, romantic, eclectic, witty, optimistic. Also Jewish, successful, tall, attractive, divorced with NYC/Hamptons homes. If you're a youthful 50s-60s nonsmoker, slim, sexy, romantic, upbeat, comfortable with home life and tennis, golf, boating, movies, opera, etc. Smile and send me a clear recent photo/bio. 2248 ✉ ☎

Assortments

FIELDS! The Matchmaker 212-391-2233 317 Madison (entr on 42nd) NYC 10017, Rm 1600. Est 1920. Free consultation & booklet. 18-80. All religions. Nationwide. Visitors invited. Open 7 days. We arrange for your children without their knowledge.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 6PM-12AM
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Terrace & Rafters Rooms and Tented Patio
UPSCALE PROFESSIONALS, 28-49, $20
800+ EXPECTED! DJ, SNACKS, DESSERT
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SINGLEFACES 732-462-2406
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5 min frm GWB. 2 age grps: 25-39 & 40+.

Professional Matchmakers—For finding that special someone... **212-271-7371**

ARA Dinner-Dance Party, 3/14, Sat, 7pm. Meet educated **Asian,Russian,Latin** ladies. **Joe Mayo's** 41 Madison @26th St. **253-1971**

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20 W. 39th St. (Off FIFTH Ave.)
WED, MARCH 18, 6pm-11pm
For info, call: 212-969-0805

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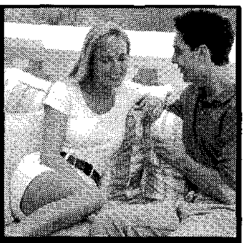
Fall In Love



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Milt's Singles—Party, Buffet & Dance. Sun, 3/15, 7:30pm **LE BAR BAT** 311 W 57 Live Band & DJ. $20. Info: **201-342-8609**

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Crossroads—The Gracious Way To Meet Quality Single People. Praised By The NY Times... For Information: **212-972-3594**

EGG DONOR—Healthy, young Caucasian sought by professional, caring woman. Generous compensation. **Call: 914-963-3563**

DOC's 9th Anniv Party, Ages 30s & 40s
LE BAR BAT 311 W. 57th St. (8th Av.) Wednesday, March 11, 6pm-11pm. $20. DJ, dancing. Drink specials. **718-279-8596**

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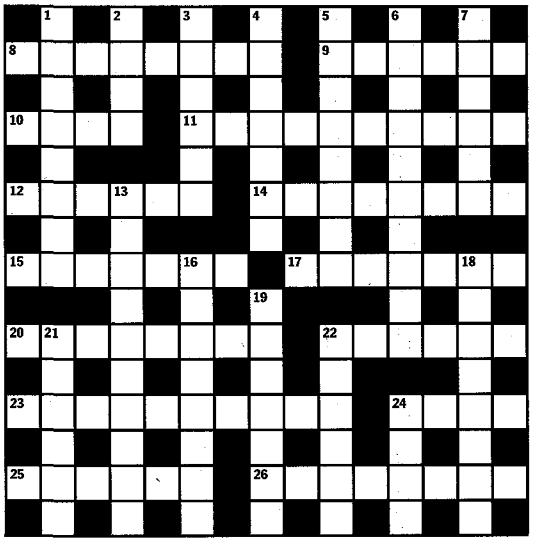
FRI, MAR 13, MAXIM'S * 6pm * $20
WOMEN ADMITTED FREE!
Dance, 680 Madison Av. 61st. **212-944-2112**

The 'Guardian' Crossword

ACROSS

8 Stumbling around is an antediluvian. (8)
9 It ventilates a French palace. (6)
10 Check in some well-travelled Italians. (4)
11 Indirectly, the fastest mover on the clock . . . (6-4).
12 . . . Record American athletic event. (6)
14 Satyr has cavorted in waste places. (3-5)
15 Call upon bishop with exotic cheese. (7)
17 Lively alien meat. (7)
20 Finished end of school in tussle. (8)
22 It could be used for repairing damage left by snake. (6)
23 Husbandry of Queen's household? (10)
24 Table Mountain? Same, only different! (4)
25 What to call work in verse, and inverse! (6)
26 Annoying a pelican, perhaps. (8)



DOWN

1 Flames out of control if riled after outbreak of wrath. (8)
2 Stop awkward delivery. (4)
3 Bones found in biblical city. (6)
4 Re-drafted circular almost essential. (7)
5 Two measures with the monarch as decider! (7)
6 Licensed house with Triad involvement. (10)
7 Bond's old mother. (6)
13 Scrooge! Poor fish! (10)
16 Trust English Non-Conformist to enter Creed wrangle. (8)
18 Regular carol service. (8)
19 Using 'White Cab' without a charm. (7)
21 Piece of stole covering up fur. (6)
22 Many cricketing-sides keep one. (6)
24 Girl I met in Writing Society. (4)

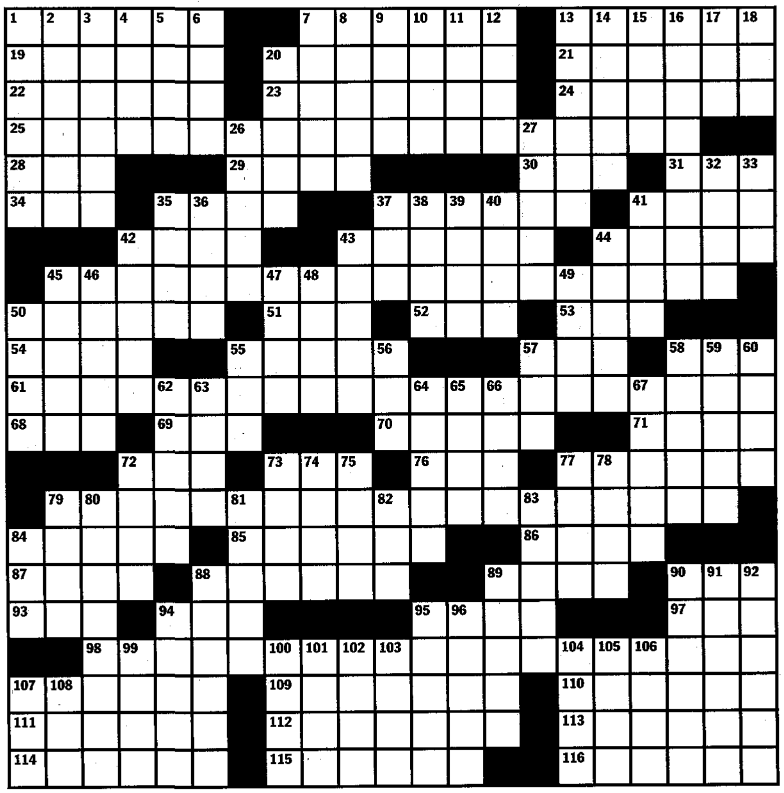
'Politically Incorrect': 'Cue' Crossword • By Maura B. Jacobson

ACROSS

1 Nursery-rhyme couple
7 "Gulliver's Travels," e.g.
13 Galen's profession
19 Saudi's land
20 Some Hispanics
21 Certain Nebraskan
22 Shutterbug's item
23 Short song for Sills
24 Corrects a clock
25 Library of Congress's comedy section?
28 Shoebox trio
29 Tenant's dues
30 Forenoon abbrs.
31 Honor-society letter
34 NFL six-pointers
35 Glided
37 Breed of dog from 19-Across
41 "The King and I" setting
42 Deity, to Caesar
43 Black-belt martial art
44 Owner of Tara
45 Cabinet branch for traitors?
50 Grammy-winner Warwick
51 Kanga's baby
52 Cigarette dropping
53 Sweet potato
54 Your, familiarly: Fr.
55 Rancho rope
57 Footed vase
58 Russ. state, once
61 "—— broth" (political adage?)
68 At —— cost
69 Service charge
70 Jackson and Nelligan
71 Gave the once-over
72 Partake of the cuisine
73 Kipling novel
76 Tappan —— Bridge
77 Championships
79 Securities and ——?
84 Toastmaster
85 Affectedly excessive
86 Might's go-with
87 Tennessee team, informally
88 Plump up
89 Jail-window décor
90 —— Lanka
93 Vital statistic
94 Cassis cocktail
95 Bluenose
97 Calligrapher's need
98 Jewelry for Senate approval?
107 Dinner high point
109 Heart chamber
110 Repair shop's replacement car
111 Rob or Carl
112 Bed covering
113 Administrate
114 School time-out
115 Rescinds an order, at sea
116 Discombobulates

DOWN

1 Drawer freshener
2 Appealed to Heaven
3 Famed pharaoh
4 Act as accomplice
5 Whitewall, e.g.
6 Germany's coal region
7 See-through wrap
8 Leaning to one side
9 Even Steven
10 Division word
11 College mil. gp.
12 Biblical twin
13 Scale start
14 Prophetic signs
15 Fracture encasement
16 Actor
17 Stable staple
18 Hosp. staffers
20 Spiked the punch
26 Eire-born
27 Manufacturer
32 Lyricist with Rodgers
33 "—— Believer," Monkees hit
35 Penn name
36 Magazine magnate
37 Far from joyful
38 Kind of code
39 Circuits of a racetrack
40 Bryce Canyon state
41 Son of Noah
42 Jeans fabric
43 Anagram of Tokyo
44 Yemenite's neighbor
45 Biggie of myth
46 Spacious
47 Heiden of the ice
48 Lion's greeting
49 Neophyte
50 Facts and figures
55 Pumpernickel's kin
56 NASA affirmative
57 Elevator buttons
58 Tracing tool, for short
59 Luster
60 Cincinnati nine
62 "—— in the Crowd"
63 Abbr. in Amsterdam
64 Toy musical instrument
65 Stern's opposite
66 Appear to be
67 Permit entrance
72 Former spouses
73 Nautical speed unit
74 "—— Rhythm"
75 Portion out
77 One of the Romanovs
78 Egyptian goddess
79 Urban haze
80 Many-styled
81 Early video-game company
82 Debate side
83 Mirror sight
84 Little ——, Stowe heroine
88 Drum-corps tootlers
89 I.Q.-test developer
90 Of the backbone
91 Fail to follow suit
92 French classicist painter
94 Where pants wear out
95 Overly selective
96 Play assignments
99 Caen's river
100 Director Ellis ——
101 Stubborn one
102 Sea east of the Caspian
103 Singing Turner
104 Before Mater
105 Way to Mandalay
106 McNally's partner
107 Gum it up
108 Born as



Solutions to last week's puzzles appear on page 59.

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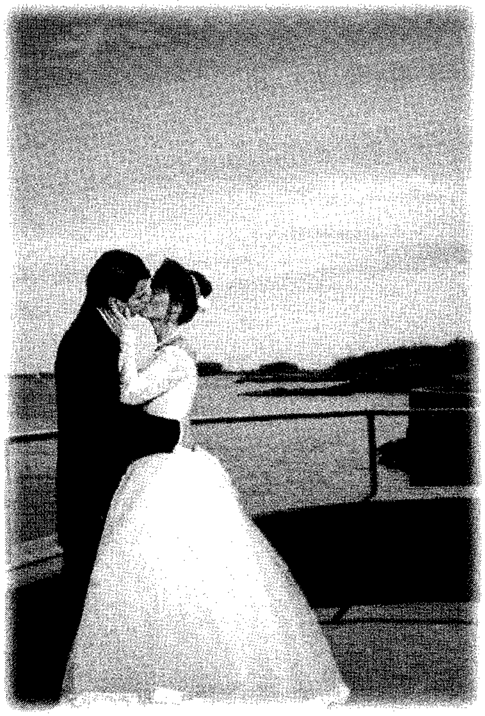
Where All Your Dreams Come True



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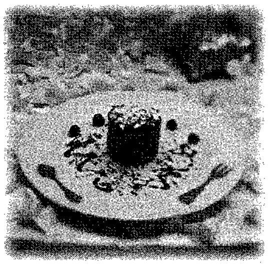

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